



The Philatelic Communicator

Journal of Writers Unit 30 of the

American Philatelic Society

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Twenty Secrets of Inspiration

By John M. Hotchner

"How do you keep up *U.S. Notes* week after week?" This is a question I am asked repeatedly by my *Linn's Stamp News* readers. My usual answer is, "I don't think or worry about it; I just do it." That's accurate, but perhaps a bit flip.

The real answer is a combination of efficient use of time and endless inspiration. The latter is not dropped from heaven like the rain; it requires considerable focus and application. But more about that in a moment.

Efficient use of time has already been addressed in these pages. My "Twenty Secrets of High Productivity" can be found on pages 19 and 20 of the Second Quarter 1988 *Philatelic Communicator*. Readers of this article who would like a copy of that one may have one by sending 15¢ in mint postage to cover photocopying, and a 29¢ stamped, addressed envelope to me at P.O. Box 1125, Falls Church, VA 22041-0125.

Now, let's get on to the matter of inspiration, by which I mean "What to write about?" Why am I not cursed with the blank stare at a blank piece of paper?

I am lucky because my subject, U.S. philately, even when focused on the 20th century—which is *U.S. Notes's* charter—is a feast of diverse and tasty morsels that fairly beg to be appreciated.

I am convinced that I can do this column for years and years to come without running out of material. And this includes meeting a stiff requirement that I lay on myself: Every column must contain at least one contribution to philatelic knowledge for the average collector; either a new discovery recorded, new information, or a compilation of facts that were previously well hidden in specialty or non-philatelic literature.

Beyond the fact of endless subject matter, here are my 20 "secrets" of prodding inspiration:

Identifying Material To Write About:

1. *Take the time to become familiar with the existing philatelic literature in your area*, and add the most useful works to your library as your checkbook allows. This includes keeping up with

►► Page 68, column one.

Inside USPS Headquarters

By Ken Lawrence

Shortly after Postmaster General Anthony Frank and Assistant Postmaster General Gordon Morison received advance copies of my First Quarter open letter, Don McDowell, Director of the Office of Stamp and Philatelic Marketing, sent a memorandum to all his managers at USPS headquarters titled "Media Inquiries." It was somewhat more candid than Gordon Morison's reply published here in our Second Quarter issue.

McDowell began, "It will be no surprise to any of you when I say that unavoidable circumstances have caused our relationships with philatelic writers and publications to deteriorate badly during the last year."

McDowell's memo, dated March 22, 1991, gives a rare glimpse of Postal Service bosses' attitude toward the philatelic press. After instructing his staff to refer all press inquiries, without exception, to a single staffer, he wrote, "It is a given that reporters and the organizations they represent will take exception to this, calling it 'managing the news,' 'censorship' or worse."

Why must all but one be muzzled? "Some reporters love to catch us giving more than one answer to a question." McDowell called this "whipsawing."

To his chosen flack, he wrote, "To the extent you can control it, you must avoid being quoted as saying 'I don't know.' There are sharks out there who will delight in painting you (and the Postal Service) as a fool because *you* don't know what *they* expect you to know."

Where did these odd attitudes toward reporters come from? What "unavoidable" circumstances transformed this formerly jovial crew who welcomed our every inquiry, no matter how trivial, into tough adversaries inside a sandbagged bunker?

Of course, this isn't the face presented to every reporter, as letters by George Amick (in *Linn's*) and Charles Teed (Second Quarter *PC*) attest, but it definitely is the face behind the mask.

Despite McDowell's disdain for reporters, the overall tone of his memo was upbeat: "I hope, however, that you will take

►► Page 69, column one.

By Robert de Violini

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DEADLINES

Fourth Quarter 1991
September 20.

First Quarter 1992
November 20.

As Ken Lawrence has pointed out, he usually gets the letters from people who like what's in this publication, and I get the letters from people who don't. And frankly, there have been a number of things in this past issue and other recent issues that I have not been too happy with.

However, as I indicated last time, I don't see Ken's surprises much before the rest of the members do. No one gets a preview of what he plans to put into each issue, and thus no review of what's going to appear is possible. Only he and Joe Frye know what's coming, and Joe adds his own notes here and there as he goes. I do get my copy by first class mail, and sometimes Joe ships me a couple of extra copies by bulk mail (or worse, by UPS), but not always.

I am on the side of the "not likes" again this time with respect to the thing by Jeff Needleman that was inserted in the last issue. I don't know Jeff Needleman, and had never seen anything of his before this item appeared. I see from the ASDA Directory that he is involved with promoting stamps as an investment item—something that many collectors take a dim view of. I have no idea if this is typical of what he puts out as a "house organ" or whatever it might properly be called. But, to borrow an old cliché, I was not amused, and I hope it is sometime well into the next century before anything of its ilk appears in this publication again.

Some background on how this insert section came to be. The deadline for that issue was essentially the weekend of ROMPEX. About ten days before the show I got a phone call from Steve Rod, who was all excited about "the Needleman newsletter." As indicated above, I had no idea of what he was talking about. Steve tried to explain it to me, unsuccessfully, and then he said he would mail me a copy so I would have a chance to look it over before okaying its use in the PC. That copy never arrived, and I found out on ROMPEX Saturday that Steve was unable to be there, so I couldn't ask him more about it.

On Sunday morning, in the press of getting set up for the WU Breakfast, Ken started to talk to me about it. He had a copy of this thing with him, and with only a couple of minutes time available, he flipped through its pages rapidly. There was no real opportunity for me to read it and try to figure it all out. All I recall seeing were some flashy headlines and pull-outs in the text.

I was assured that 1) he had an okay in writing from Mr. Needleman to reprint it, 2) that camera-ready masters would be provided Joe Frye so Joe need do nothing with them, and 3) that this was the greatest bit of humor writing in many years, and was indeed something that WU members would get a big kick out of. Ken was wrong on two of these three points.

From my mail and phone calls, several members certainly did not find anything funny in those eight pages. Also, Joe reported that he had to go to some lengths to get those pages into a form that his printer could use. Because of the additional time required to assemble all the parts for that issue, it was several days late in getting into the mail.

I think that it was unfortunate that this thing came along with essentially no lead time to permit at least some of the officers to read it carefully, and decide upon its value to the membership before spending the money to print it. Presumably, it was some sort of an "April Fool" joke, but I think the joke was on us. My apologies to the membership and to the WU treasury.

[Printing differences made the negatives Needleman provided more costly to use than shooting his original journal. iff]

New Topic: This will be my last "president's message" to you. The new group of Writers Unit officers will take over at the WU Breakfast at STAMPSHOW in Philadelphia. I hope that many of you will be there to welcome them.

I have enjoyed working with the present group, and want to particularly acknowledge the excellent assistance given me by George Griffenhagen over these past six years or so that I have

been either vice-president or president of this organization. Steve Rod and Diana Manchester have both been of great help in getting the WU Breakfasts sailing again into clearer waters. Alan Warren's work for the Philadelphia event promises to be of the same calibre. And I don't want to overlook the ongoing outstanding support of Barbara Mueller, either. Her counsel will always be appreciated.

Please give Charlie Peterson and the rest of the new officers and Council members your support—and particularly, send your writing tips and aids along to Ken Lawrence. Make *The Philatelic Communicator* into a useful publication for the philatelic writer, editor, and columnist. Let's work to get out of the muck and mire of the present name-calling era. □

Bulletin Board

Error 1. USPS Philatelic Release 46 stated, "The [3¢] Bluebird and [1¢] Kestrel stamps are the first multicolor denominated postage stamps to be printed entirely on offset presses." Actually, the first such U.S. stamp was the 20¢ Official coil stamp issued May 19, 1988. All U.S. Officials released since 1988, denominated or not, have been multicolor offset-only prints.

Errors 2 and 3. Two page 3 articles in the June 1 *Stamp Collector* misreported developments at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Stephen G. Esrati wrote, "The long tradition of printing U.S. definitives by intaglio engraving is about to end." And Mark Kellner wrote, "Gone will be two sheet-fed web presses known as the 'A' and 'B' presses to students of U.S. postage." The C, D, and new F presses will continue the long tradition of line engraving. These and the two retired presses are all web-fed, the antonym of sheet-fed.

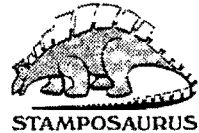
Error 4. This appeared in the August 5 *Linn's*, in reply to a collector's question: "The practice of including informational text about the subjects in the margin selvage of U.S. stamps is only 18 months old." Actually, it is 18 years old. Such inscriptions appeared in the margins of the 8¢ Postal People stamps of 1973, a set that was awarded the American Philatelic

Society's Black Blot. *Linn's* also missed the ad in the marginal selvage of the 1989 25¢ Dinosaurs stamps.

Stamps in the News 1. The July 22 *Wall Street Journal* (July 23 in the Midwest and West) carried a report on the U.S. Postal Service vs. Bureau of Engraving and Printing stamp procurement controversy. "One surprise," wrote Russell Tisinger, "is



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that it's the bureau, dragging its feet against privatization, that has drawn the most sympathy. Another surprise is that the private sector in this area is hardly a hotbed of competition."

Stamps in the News 2. The July *Consumer Reports* carried a sidebar, "How About Rare Stamps? You May Take a Licking," alongside its critique of coin investing. The only philatelic authority quoted was *Stamps* editor Karen Henry: "I would not collect stamps for an investment."

Stamp Journalism. The Postmaster General has his own house newsletter called *Frank Talk*. In the April issue he wrote, "The implementation of our new rates went well. We did experience some stamp shortages and a few long lines. But all in all, this was perhaps the smoothest transition to new rates ever." No kidding.

The PMG continued, "It was difficult, wasn't it, to explain to Americans why the First-Class rate is 29¢—the 'penny foolish stamp.'" I guess he doesn't recall the USPS 1978 "penny foolish" request for a 16¢ rate, complete with 16¢ coil stamps, sheet stamps, and embossed envelopes, that was reduced to 15¢ by the Postal Rate Commission.

More Rate Stories. Last January, as the new rates were being unveiled, the *Washington Post's* Katherine Graham attacked the Postal Service's maneuvers to favor direct mailers at the expense of newspapers and magazines in the new rate structure. "Let's call it what it is, the *ADVO* Postal Service," she said, naming the nation's largest direct-mail marketing firm. As if to prove her point, the headline on the June/July issue of *Memo to Mailers*, another Postal Service organ, is, "ADVO: A beacon among America's 'thousand points of light.'" "

Censors Unmasked. The stamps on the monthly new-issue blacklist are selected by the presidents of the three sponsoring organizations themselves: D. N. Jatia of FIP, John Mowbray of IFSDA, and Jean Varga of ASCAT. APS is this country's FIP affiliate. Did our representative vote for this program? The June issue of *FIP Flash* reports "very controversial feedback" on the listings. A resolution of protest from the Philatelic Federation of Hungary will be submitted to the FIP congress in Tokyo.

Will the Real Greg Manning Please Stand? Several of our publications have run Greg Manning's recent letter critical of the Scott catalog. It was restrained and sober in tone, not at all like Manning's 1989 diatribe. In it he deplored the proliferation of new issues, "one of the major reasons why the number of stamp collectors has declined." Yet in the June 19 *Coin World* there's a full-page, full-color Greg Manning ad for Gulf War Trading Cards. Trading cards are usually regarded as a more serious menace to stamp collecting than the philatelic items Manning condemned. "A portion of the proceeds from the sale of this set goes directly to the Alan Shawn Feinstein World Hunger Center at Brown University," says Manning's *Coin World* ad.

Hard Times at The Stamp Wholesaler. The near collapse of the American Stamp Dealers Association has forced some deep budget cuts, including *Stamp Wholesaler* subscriptions for its 883 members, saving \$6,500 (about \$7.36 per sub). Jim Magruder immediately sent out a promotion for a \$12 "professional courtesy rate" subscription. By early August, the introductory subscription price had dropped to \$10.00.

Life Imitates Art. No sooner had we mailed the Second Quarter issue with Jeff Needleman's satire than arrived in the mail a *Stamp Collector* offer for free advertising.

What is a Privilege Card? It costs £10 per year, but it's not a credit card. It's good for £1 in telephone calls on public card phones; holders receive a newsletter from Stanley Gibbons and small discounts on some purchases. (But if you pay by credit card, Gibbons adds the merchant service charge to your cost.) Ah, I see, it's another collectible.

Fish Stamps. You just knew this was coming, didn't you: America's 1991 State Fish Stamps Collection from Fleetwood. It sounds like just the thing to go with my specialized collection of mergansers. (For you non-hunters, mergansers are fish ducks, and that's what they taste like, even though they have thrice made attractive subjects on federal Duck stamps.) Really, I shouldn't joke about these things. The first article I ever wrote for *Stamp Collector* was a satire, "Next: Food Stamp First-Day Covers," lampooning Duck stamp FDCs which have since become the hit of the FDC auction market.

Don't Knock It If You Haven't Tried It. That's what defenders of literature competitions often say in response to critics, including me. I have accepted their recommendation, and I'm scheduled to be an apprentice literature judge three times this year: at STaMpsHOW, Sescal, and Chicagopex. I'm looking forward to it.

Volunteer Needed. Bob Greenwald can't continue the popular "Watching the Weeklies" column. If you would like to do it, drop me a card.

Deadlines. Fourth Quarter, September 20, First Quarter, November 20. Ken Lawrence □

Canada's First National Philatelic Literature Exhibition:

The largest national philatelic literature exhibition ever held in North America?

By Charles J. G. Verge,
Chairman, ORAPEX '91

The R.A. Stamp Club of Ottawa organized what is possibly the largest national-level philatelic literature exhibition ever held in North America in honor of the 100th anniversary of its sister club, the Ottawa Philatelic Society (OPS). The OPS was founded by John Reginald Hooper, in 1891, under the French name of Société Philatélique d'Ottawa. As far as it is known, the OPS is the longest continuous stamp club in Canada.

The literature exhibition was held May 3 to 5, 1991 at the Ray Kinsella Arena of the R.A. Centre in conjunction with the R.A.'s 30th annual and 3rd national-level philatelic exhibition, ORAPEX '91. 109 entries from Canada, the U.S., Great Britain, Germany, and Australia were entered for competition in *Canada's First National Philatelic Literature Exhibition*.

There were 53 entries in the handbook and monograph section (Section O); 19 in the philatelic newspapers (commercial) and national and international journals and periodicals section (P); 15 in the section which includes study group journals and newsletters (Q); 14 in the auction catalog section (R) and 6 in the other catalog grouping (S). As well there was one entry in the Court of Honour (L1) and one entry, the Académie québécoise d'études philatéliques' *Cahiers de l'Académie - OPUS VIII* (O30) was *hors-concours* as it was launched at the show. These numbers are certainly an indication of the healthy state of philatelic writing in these countries.

Judges Ken Rowe, Canada's only international-level philatelic literature judge; Ralph Mitchener, well-known Ottawa columnist and national-level judge; and apprentice Cimon Morin, Chief of the Canadian Postal Archives, were hard at work reading and evaluating the entries well before the show opened, in fact since mid-January. Show-goers were able to consult all the entries at the philatelic literature reading booth.

Gold Fever, a fantastic history of gold rushes throughout the world

recounted with the help of philately, was awarded a gold medal and the Literature Grand Award—a contemporary caricature of the Earl of Crawford (1847-1913), a well known philatelic literature collector. Kenneth Kutz, the author of *Gold Fever*, a native of Saskatchewan and President of the Collector's Club of New York, was on hand to accept his award at the O.P.S. Centennial Banquet which also served as ORAPEX's awards banquet.

Mr. Kutz was in Ottawa to see how the ORAPEX committee had organized *Canada's First National Philatelic Literature Exhibition*. His visit was in preparation for the first international philatelic literature exposition to be held in the U.S.A. It is sponsored jointly by the Collector's Club and the Philatelic Foundation and will be held in New York November 4 to 14, 1992.

Reserve Grand Awards were provided for each of the categories. In the handbook and monograph section (O), Walter Hubbard and Richard F. Winter's *North Atlantic Mail Sailings, 1840-1875* (Gold) was so honored. The Reserve for Section P: Philatelic newspapers (commercial) and periodicals of national and international societies was awarded to *The Philatelic Foundation Quarterly* (Vermeil). *The Czechoslovak Specialist* (Silver) won for Section Q: Philatelic journals and periodicals of study groups. The fourth Reserve Grand Award was merited by *Postal Stationery of Ireland* (Silver) entered on behalf of the Forschungs- und Arbeitsgemeinschaft Irland in the other catalog section (S).

The Jury underlined the high caliber of the entries by awarding Felicitations to four entries. These were Menachim Max Mayo's *Anatolia* (Gold); The Philatelic Foundation's *Opinions I-V: The Complete Abstracts and Index* (Silver); Edward Zaluski's *Canadian Revenues, Volume I - III* (Silver) and *Philatélie Québec* (Silver) edited by Francois Brisse. (A complete listing of all the medals awarded to the literature entrants will be found under Literature Awards on page 66.)

The judges felt that Section R: Auction catalogs should not be judged as there existed no criteria for judging them in philatelic literature exhibitions. The organizing committee of ORAPEX '91 was not aware of this when issuing the prospectus. As a result, all entries in the section (R1 - R14), and entries S2 and S6 which were sent to that section by the jury, were transferred to the Court of Honour.

Three judging seminars were also held during the show. One, on how to judge philatelic literature, led by Ken Rowe, was for Bill Bailey of Vancouver, Paul Burega and myself, who are both from Ottawa, the last step for accreditation as national literature judges.

Canada Post provided two different cancellations at ORAPEX '91. The first, which was available all three days of Ottawa's National Stamp Exhibition—May 3, 4 and 5, 1991, featured a stack of books in commemoration of philatelic literature. A second handstamp was used only on May 4, 1991, to honor the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Ottawa Philatelic Society. It showed a stylized version of the club's logo.

The combined banquet and awards ceremony in celebration of the OPS's 100th birthday was attended by some 100 guests. Gini Horn, Director of Library Services of the American Philatelic Society (APS) and Associate Editor of the *American Philatelic Literature Review*, was the guest speaker. Her interesting talk centered around the philatelic periodicals of the 1890s.

In concluding this article, I must apologize, on behalf of the organizing committee of ORAPEX '91, to all the exhibitors to *Canada's First National Philatelic Literature Exhibition* for the delay in providing them with the results of their entry in our show.

This delay resulted from technical difficulties in preparing the award packages and in crossed wires between members of the organizing committee. As an organizing committee, at its first try with a national-level philatelic literature exhibition, we were not prepared to deal with the large number of entries (109) we received and therefore did not have all the materials available for distribution. As well, we had communications difficulties among ourselves which ended in one member believing another had done the mailing.

As far as I know, all award packages were received by exhibitors by early July. I would like to offer once again our apologies for any inconvenience our difficulties may have caused the exhibitors, their societies or their organizations. We will do better next time and we invite you to enter Canada's Second National Philatelic Literature Exhibition which will be held in Ottawa during the 65th Convention of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada at ROYAL * 1993 * ROYALE at/d ORAPEX, April 30 avril / May 2 mai, 1993. Prospecti will be available in June 1992 and can be obtained by writing to me at P.O. Box 2788, Station 'D', Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1P 5W8. □

One Dot Can Make A Difference

By Herman Herst Jr.

The magazine *Writer's Digest* always makes good reading. The title is what they use; they apparently prefer the singular, as though they had but one reader.

The importance of punctuation in the written word is known to us all, but there was a display to indicate how important a period is. By misplacing it, the entire gist of a paragraph is changed.

Take a look at this group of sentences:

Dear John:

I want a man who knows what love is. All about you are generous, kind, thoughtful people, who are not like you. Admit to being useless and inferior, John. You have ruined me. For other men, I yearn. For you, I have no feelings whatsoever. When we're apart, I can be forever happy. Will you let me be?

Yours, Gloria

Now take a look at the paragraph when the periods are put in other places.

Dear John:

I want a man who knows what love is all about. You are generous, kind, thoughtful. People who are not like you admit to being useless and inferior, John. You have ruined me for other men. I yearn for you. I have no feelings whatsoever when we're apart. I can be forever happy. Will you let me be yours?

Gloria

One can come up with totally different meanings when commas or semi-colons are used a bit differently. □

Pick of the Litter-ature Award VII

By Ken Lawrence

British stamp dealer Charles Stanikowski, his Filipina wife Nympha, and their young sons Robert and Henryk, were captured by the Iraqis during the invasion of Kuwait. His wife and children were released and sent to Britain, but Stanikowski was held hostage in Baghdad until December.

His first-hand account of the ordeal is carried in the May and June issues of *The Philatelic Exporter*. It has no close rival for this quarter's Pick of the Litter-ature Award. Although he emerged destitute, and currently works as a substitute teacher in London, he plans to return to his stamp business in Kuwait.

He concluded his article with philatelic advice. He suggests that his fellow dealers and collectors search out covers from Safat, Kuwait, to Baghdad, franked with Iraqi stamps during the occupation. He believes any covers bearing Kuwaiti definitives issued shortly before the invasion will be good, as will Kuwaiti coil stamps and Framas. □

LETTERS

An Open Letter to the Editor of *The Philatelic Communicator*

Dear Ken:

My timing of this letter (for publication in the Third Quarter *Philatelic Communicator*) is deliberate. I want to make my

remarks as a WU 30 member, and not have them misread either as a pre-election campaign speech or a post-election presidential policy statement.

To paraphrase the open letter you published two issues back: relations between members of the Writers Unit and its editor have never been worse. The Writers Unit is losing members through non-renewal and outright resignation, in large measure as a direct result of your recent style of editing.

This is ironic. Over the past few years, you have opened up the *PC* with new approaches. There's been a noticeably higher amount of member participation, on a wider range of subjects. You've attracted some very good articles, in the philosophical vein as well as on the technical and "how to do it" side of things. But now diversity has given way to controversy and adversarial cheap shots, editorship has been converted to a personal forum, and readers/members are dreading rather than anticipating each new issue.

The Philatelic Communicator is not your journal, Ken; it's the organ of the Writers Unit and its members. Your job as editor is to provide a viable forum for information to and communication among the membership—not to cram your own opinions, prejudices and antipathies down members' throats with purple prose, or demonstrate to them your personal infallibility and cleverness.

You may have strong feelings about such things as the FIP-ASCAT-IFSDA black blot program. That doesn't give you a charter to "keep the banners flying" in the *PC* whenever and wherever you spot—or make—an opportunity. You need to remember the difference in roles and responsibilities between editor and author/columnist.

Good editorship also includes practicing tolerance and respect. You, however, have been intolerant of others to the point of rudeness, incivility and downright nastiness. I'm not going to name examples. You know who you've gunned down and who you have on your hit list, and so do they; I'm not going to reopen any of those wounds in this letter. There's no call for the *ad hominem* (and *ad nauseam*) remarks that you've made from the safety of the "last-word" editorial pulpit.

So as a concerned member, I'm asking you to come to grips with your responsibilities as an editor. Use other venues for the personae of controversial columnist and true believer in selected philatelic causes. *The Philatelic Communicator* is about philatelic writing—yes, and editing—not about some of those targets of your attention which really should be dealt with in a different shooting gallery than the *PC*.

If you want to exercise the editor's prerogative to write an editorial, or that of writer/member to submit an article, that's certainly your privilege—but do so in considerably more moderation than you've been doing lately. And above all, exercise more humility and humanity when addressing others' foibles.

I'm not asking you to become a Pollyanna or a Milquetoast . . . just to go back to being the very good editor that you used to be.

Sincerely,

Charlie Peterson

□

Joe Frye responds:

I agree that there has been a divergence from what I perceive as the purpose of The Philatelic Communicator BUT: The letters section ever since Ken took over proves response to content has been very far above anything in my experience.

Yes we have had a few vote with their feet. I do not recall seeing any—or, if any, very little—input from them in The Philatelic Communicator OR Unit activities, and feel in general their loss is no loss at all. Over the years from dollar-a-year-for-as-many-years-as-you-want-to-pay to our present dues level, those who have dropped out, resigned, or whatever (deceased excepted) have also fallen, in the vast majority: no writee, no talkee, no doee, no helpee.

A roster of today's Unit lists nearly ALL the "doers" in U.S. philately. I see this roster four times a year when I send out mailings and it continues to impress. Yes, there are many I don't know personally, and even don't know of. My participation at the two APS functions the past few years has been zilch for many reasons, but it is still true—our members (present members) are the movers and shakers in the hobby. They must be getting their money's worth and I feel nearly all of them enjoy the dogfights as well as the Einsteinian works in our journal. I know I do.

Yes, I would like less name-calling and back-biting in the pages. I would like more helpful information on how-to and why-not-to. I would welcome a neutral article on why-not-to do what we've been doing recently and what-to-do in future!

Ken knows I have only respect, admiration, and support for him. In my unique position I can and do have an opinion and have expressed some of it above. As long as I can swallow what comes through my eyes, down my fingertips, to the computer and out the door to the mailbox, I will maintain that r, a, and s for Ken. When it gets too thick to swim through I will resign. I don't expect to be resigning.

Let us go gently into the future, replete in the satisfaction that we have stirred the hornets' nest, opened the eyes, ears, and fingers-to-write-letters-with of our members, and, with publication of Charlie Peterson's letter above, will have lots of fun implementing the responses—which should be legion. □

From Martin Margulis:

I very much liked the Needleman insert. Let's see more like that. Thank you.

How come there is only one candidate for each high office? There were lots for council. Not that they're not excellent candidates. □

From Alan Warren:

After reading the commentary on commentary in the Second Quarter *PC*, I suggest you start a section entitled Letters to Letters to the Editor. In that vein I would like to comment on a couple of items in that issue.

Randy Neil chastises you for listing delinquent members. The Scandinavian Collectors Club often lists members being dropped for non-payment of dues. This serves several purposes. It rattles the cages of the procrastinators who have failed to respond to the regular dues notice and two follow-up reminders. It stimulates those members who personally know some of those

about to be dropped so they can be approached about renewing. Thirdly it impresses on officers and members the fact that there is a good bit of attrition and raises the flag that maybe some things about the organization should be changed in order to retain members.

In his discussion on mailing books, Ernst Cohn does not know the upper weight limit for the Special Fourth Class Rate. The table 711.32 in the *Domestic Mail Manual* goes to 70 pounds, which is presumably the maximum. This is also true for the special Library Rate that Ernst discusses (Table 711.42 in the *DMM*). Ernst is correct that the address side must be endorsed "Library Rate." However, the word "Library" does not have to appear in the address as he states. The address requirement is much broader.

According to Section 725.1, "Each package must show in the address or return address the name of a school, college, university, public library, museum, or herbarium, or the name of a nonprofit religious, educational, scientific, philanthropic (or charitable), agricultural, labor, veterans', or fraternal organization."

Furthermore, the items that are permitted under these low rates are not just books and similar library items, but other kinds of material loaned or exchanged by the institution or organization with its members, readers, or borrowers. These materials include books, printed music, theses, periodicals, sound recordings, unpublished manuscripts, and museum items such as specimens, collections, teaching aids, and interpretive material of an educational nature. Even photographic materials in the form of slides, film strips, and microfilm are included as well as scientific kits. The main requirement is that the materials must be sent to *or from* an institution or organization as cited above. □

From Henry W. Beecher:

Ernst M. Cohn makes some good points about the need for publication of some of the less-used postal rates. I may yet have published in *Stamp Collector* a condensed tabulation of all the rates effective Feb. 3, 1991.

Unfortunately he errs in his presentation of the rates applying to books. The Special Fourth-Class Rate of 43¢ per pound applies to the second through the seventh pound. The Library Rate for each pound beyond the seventh pound is 12¢, not 22¢. The weight limit on parcels in either subclass is 70 pounds.

The requirement to include "Books" in the endorsement was dropped several years ago. The respective endorsements are simply "Special Fourth-Class Rate" and "Library Rate." The proper location for any class endorsement is between the postage and the address.

The Special Fourth-Class Rate applies to more than books. Other materials include 16mm or narrower films, sound recordings, and playscripts and manuscripts for books, periodicals, and music. Thus a manuscript weighing as little as five ounces may be sent more cheaply at the "book" rate than as First-Class Mail. Delivery may be slower, but I find that small fourth-class (and single-piece third-class) packages commonly travel as fast as First-Class Mail.

Neither does the Library Rate apply only to books sent on

loan by public libraries or returned to them by borrowers. Among others, it applies to books, periodicals, sound recordings, and other library or museum materials when loaned or exchanged between schools, colleges, universities, public libraries, museums, herbariums, and nonprofit religious, educational, scientific, philanthropic, agricultural, labor, veterans', and fraternal organizations, or between them and their members or borrowers. It also applies to books mailed by a publisher or distributor to schools (including bookstores they control) or public libraries. A book sent by its publisher to Library of Congress for copyright would be eligible, I believe. In all cases the address must include the name of the qualifying institution, whether library or something else.

It should be noted that to qualify for these rates a book must consist of at least 24 pages, of which at least 22 are printed, must contain primarily reading matter, and may contain no advertising other than incidental announcements of other books. Accordingly, such volumes as Scott catalogs are not "books" (although they may qualify as "library materials"). I have not seen a ruling on whether a reference stamp catalog (as opposed to a sales catalog) without advertising may be mailed at the Special Fourth-Class Rate. Of course, ineligible "book-like" matter is often mailed at that rate, and it is most uncommon for a fourth-class parcel to be opened for postal inspection unless the sender mails such materials in considerable volume.

Book-like material such as stamp catalogs and telephone directories may be mailed as another subclass of fourth-class mail: Bound Printed Matter. To qualify, the material must be permanently bound (not in looseleaf binders) and be in packages weighing no more than ten pounds. Unlike the other subclasses mentioned, BPM rates vary by distance, using the regular parcel post zones. Unlike parcel post, rate steps are by the half-pound through five pounds, then by the pound. Examples: 2½ pounds to zone 1 or 2 is \$1.33; to zone 8 is \$2.12. Rates are generally intermediate between parcel post and Special Fourth-Class.

Yes, there is a special international rate for books (and sheet music). To Canada it is \$1.20 for the first pound, 88¢ for the second pound, and 80¢ for each additional pound, with a limit of 11 pounds. To all other countries it is \$1.36 for the first pound, 96¢ for the second pound, and 90¢ for each additional pound. Weight limit is 22 pounds to members of the Postal Union of the Americas, Spain, and Portugal, and 11 pounds to all other countries. These are rates for surface transmission, of course.

Airmail rates are the same for all kinds of Printed Matter, Small Packets, and Matter for the Blind, and vary by geographic region. Examples for a two-pound parcel: Canada \$4.32, Mexico \$5.25, other Western Hemisphere \$6.99, Europe \$11.59, most of Asia and Africa \$15.59, and Pacific Rim \$15.81.

Joe Frye's suggestion to ask at a post office for *Postal Bulletin* 21781A was good for the time soon after the February rate change, but I doubt that many offices still have extra copies to distribute. All post offices should have available for free distribution Notice 59, *Domestic Postage Rates, Fees, and Information*, a small folder essentially like Poster 103 (which should be in all post office lobbies), which does not cover the less-used rates such as those for the fourth-class subclasses; also

Publication 51, *International Postage Rates and Fees*, a small pamphlet which is fairly comprehensive. But for full information, read the relevant parts of the *Domestic Mail Manual* and the *International Mail Manual*. As I keep publicizing, anyone has the right to consult these manuals at any post office, because the regulations published therein have the force of law. The manuals are also available in larger public libraries; and subscriptions are available to the public through the Superintendent of Documents.

I agree with Ken, the April Fool issue of *Going Up!* was excellent satire. Jeff did an acute job on the writings of Pat Herst and myself. (But surely I have never suggested that postal clerks never made mistakes, even in the 19th century!) □

From Russell H. Anderson:

With you I tend to believe in "shaking them up a bit" to rouse them out of complacency.

I have been getting a distinct charge out of your caustic comments, but reserve the right to wonder if a bit of tempering might not reach the same ends. I realize of course that some of it is bantering between those who know each other well.

I was not kidding when I said in my earlier letter that I read the *Communicator* cover to cover. At age 71 it is a pleasure to read material that lays it on the line. □

From Edward T. Superson:

Attached hereto is my election ballot without a vote. I do not accept any "election" with only one person being nominated. It smells. (This type of ballot used to be in Moscow for the commie party). Check the definition for the word election in any dictionary.

Ken Lawrence was correct in his open letter. The USPS administration is inept and wastes the hard-earned taxpayers' money. We do not need "apologetniks" for the truth, as it was determined by the Congressional Committee.

Diana Manchester's survey is an intelligent approach for the good of the journal.

Congratulations on the fine edition of the last (Second Quarter 1991) journal. □

From John M. Hotchner:

The word "scurrilous" leaps to mind, in its *Webster's Ninth Edition* second meaning: "coarse abuse," as I read your reply to Les Winick's letter on page 29 of the Second Quarter *PC*. Your treatment of *Stamp Collector* editor David Schiller in that reply is scurrilous and a misuse of the considerable talent with which you have been blessed. It goes far beyond any provocation that Schiller may have given by his written opinions or his actions.

The parallel you draw between Schiller and the purported editor of the largely fictional, abusive and vengeful rag titled *The Stamper* is both offensive and inaccurate. In doing this you have chosen to swim in Puleo's gutter.

Bad enough that you would do this in your own name, but to do so as editor of the *PC* in its pages is unconscionable. I was willing to overlook the indiscretions of your open letter to the U.S. Postal Service. I am not willing to overlook this.

By copy of this letter I am requesting that the outgoing president and the incoming president consult, with the object of requiring that your opinion pieces in the *PC* be approved by the

president, another responsible officer, or an editorial board.

On a more urgent basis, you clearly owe an apology to Schiller, and it should be as public as your attack: a letter to him, followed by publication of it in the *PC*.

On a personal note, I have enjoyed the liveliness you have brought to your duties as *PC* editor. We have not always agreed in the past, but I have had great respect for you and your abilities. But I am beginning to wonder if your persona as investigative reporter has begun to go to your head? Please be advised that the elemental rules of journalistic ethics and decency have not been suspended for you in honor of your past accomplishments. □

From Terence Hines:

I loved the Second Quarter *PC*! □

From Charles J. G. Verge:

I have taken your notice to heart in the First Quarter 1991 issue of *The Philatelic Communicator* and will send you, in ample time, all relevant information for *Canada's Second National Philatelic Literature Exhibition* which will be held during the 65th Convention of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada at ROYAL * 1993 * ROYALE at/a ORAPEX April 30 to May 2, 1993.

I am enjoying reading *The Philatelic Communicator*, especially the discussion about USPS contracts and stamps being printed in Canada. So much for Free Trade. What will be next, American bank notes and securities printed in Mexico? Tsk! Tsk! □

[His welcome diskette with text in WordPerfect 5.0 for his coverage of the 1991 event in this issue was very much appreciated.
Joe Frye]

From Dale Speirs:

The Second Quarter *PC* was received here in Calgary on June 24. I don't want to remove the membership survey from the issue for fear of ruining the auction value of a run of *PC*, and I'm too tired to bother carrying it in to the office to photocopy it (not to mention the photocopier is located by my boss's office; he might wonder what *PC* has to do with parks maintenance). So apologies to both Diana Manchester and Joe Frye for not writing them direct.

Back in the early 1980s, I subscribed to dozens of philatelic periodicals. I am fortunate to have a unionized and reasonably secure job, which has kept my standard of living today about the same as it was ten years ago. Most people in private industry are less fortunate. But even with my situation, the bills are difficult to handle, so each year I must decide which periodicals not to renew. The marginal collecting interests went first, one by one. *Biophilately*, *Officially Sealed Notes*, and *EFO Collector* are all excellent periodicals, but economic reality dictated that I drop them in favour of frivolous things like utility bills and car insurance.

I renewed my membership in Writers Unit 30 only after some thought. I joined it to pick up useful information about editing, writing, and publishing. The announcements of literature shows are of interest to trophy hunters such as me. The letter to the editor provide a stimulating source of ideas.

“Watching the Weeklies” and some of the book reviews provide information and gossip about the process of editing and publishing philatelic literature.

But I wonder if I will renew next year.

An article about the difficulty of getting new-issue data from USPS is certainly relevant in *PC*. An article about possible corruption and sharp practice in the letting of stamp contracts belongs in *Linn's*, not *PC*. Much more investigative journalism such as this and I shall vote with my feet.

Arguments about *New York Times* “knowledgeable sources” can illustrate potential problems for the rest of us. Parody newsletters that are mildly amusing at best fail to illustrate much more than how to waste the resources of the WU 30.

The *PC* has been a livelier periodical of late, but then so is the *National Enquirer*. If the demand for philatelic gossip is there, I suggest starting up a *Philatelic Enquirer*. I wouldn't subscribe to it myself, but if it resulted in a quieter *PC* devoted to the original intent of the WU 30, then I would renew my membership next year. □

From Stephen H. Olson:

Am I missing something?

When I joined Writers Unit 30 in 1989, my goal was to upgrade my skills as a philatelic writer, an enjoyable avocation I had just begun.

My only connection with WU 30 has been through my quarterly reading of *PC*. While it appears to be mechanically well executed, I am not yet up to speed on understanding the contents, much like a new soap opera viewer trying to get caught up with the plot.

After almost two years of reading *PC*, I'm starting to doubt my emotions. While I recognize some of the shortcomings of the USPS, the philatelic press, dealers, collectors, and the world in general, I find myself unable to get in the swing of things. Why don't I find philatelic topics that incense me? Why don't I want to write vitriolic copy about any of those topics?

As a regular reader of several philatelic publications in recent years, I have developed a great deal of respect for quite a few philatelic writers by virtue of the quality of their writing. When reading *PC*, I find it disheartening to witness their journalistic fratricide on a quarterly basis.

Further, I was confused by the “Going Up” insert; not really conversant in the in-group “humor,” it took me a while, but I finally figured out that the insert's April date matched up with the fact that it is part of the Second Quarter 1991 issue of *PC*, and this was probably a belated April Fool's Day joke. Receiving it after the Fourth of July, I realized that the publication for philatelic writers missed its own deadline by three months!

It's not my style to complain without suggesting some solutions to the problems that I see (and maybe no one else does!):

1. Each issue should include, no further back than page three, a summary of key events from the previous issue. I'm hardly an in-group member, and from quarter to quarter I just forget why Joe Puleo is like Dave Schiller, or why we're picking on Jim Magruder. I don't even remember what the infamous open letter to Gordon Morison said, and I still confuse

the names of the good guy and the bad guy in the *Stamps* magazine soap opera. Maybe other fringe members share my view. An added benefit would be that a one-page review of this nature would generate three pages of replies from incensed readers, thus facilitating a nice even four-page expansion of *PC*.

2. Another idea would be to draft an involved and knowledgeable member to prepare a periodic “Cliff Notes,” summarizing all of the incidents that the philatelic press should be upset about. Recognizing that different writers have different opinions, alternate versions of the “Cliff Notes” might appear, however, confusing matters even worse.

3. When I first heard about WU 30, I just assumed that the main purpose was to enable members to upgrade their skills in philatelic writing. If my assumption was correct, it would be really neat to see more articles on that subject.

4. I really marvel at the skills of certain individuals in managing their time so effectively. While I don't know any of these people personally, I am awe-struck by anyone who can simultaneously be an officer in several philatelic societies, a highly productive writer, maybe an exhibitor, a philatelist (some of us still collect stamps too!); in addition, I assume that some of these people have careers and families that involve time commitments. How do they do it all, I wonder? I'd love to see an article on time management, targeted for busy philatelic writers.

Gosh, writing this letter was good therapy! My heart is starting to pound, my palms are sweaty, and I'm feeling agitated. Maybe I'm ready to get into the WU 30 swing of things! □

From Dr. Robert Rabinowitz:

I must point out an error you made in the Second Quarter 1991 *Philatelic Communicator*. You stated that I had called to express my “enthusiastic endorsement” of your open letter regarding the USPS's use of private printing contractors and later reversed myself and blasted you in my April 1991 *Coil Number Exposé*. However, that's not the way it happened.

Linn's had run an excellent editorial regarding problems with communications with the USPS. I wrote many columns in *Linn's* during the 1970's and 1980's about this subject and felt *Linn's* did a good job in bringing the problem into greater focus. I called Mike Laurence, the publisher, and complimented him. It was at this time he told me that you were “on top” of this problem and would soon publish a major piece regarding the USPS/BEP/private printers situation. I received this news with enthusiasm although Laurence would provide little detail.

Wanting to learn more about it, I called you. You were very vague although you did indicate that you had put a good story together and that it was quite an exposé. And you did have my “enthusiastic endorsement.” But bear in mind, I did not see any of the article when I demonstrated this enthusiasm.

The article you published did have many accusations in it, some serious ones. But while I expected various forms of substantiation, I found at best speculation and no evidence whatsoever. Since I too from time to time have been at the short end of your unjustified accusations, I had sympathy for Don McDowell and the other USPS people and “reversed myself,” withdrawing my endorsement. □

REVIEWS

What Does the Salm Foundation Report Mean?

By Ken Lawrence

Collectors Club of Chicago, Arthur Salm Foundation, Report Number 1, March 1991. Two sides of one page. Free (send SASE) from Arthur Salm Foundation, 1029 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, IL 60610.

Prize for the least-understood piece of philatelic literature published in 1991 goes to the Collectors Club of Chicago for *Arthur Salm Foundation Report Number 1*. That is unfortunate, because the authors are trying to provide stamp collectors with a useful service that no one else has provided. Worse still, the very ambiguity of the report is fraught with a potential for mischief, such as in Leonard Hartmann's July *American Philatelist* ad claiming to offer "The Only Album Pages that are Right" on the supposed authority of the Salm Foundation.

How to Test Stamp Products Scientifically

Science depends on openness, the ability of colleagues to scrutinize, criticize, and repeat what others have done. Science is not revealed truth, but a never-ending critical quest for the best answers to problems, always subject to test by replication and independent verification.

Concealing the identity of the Salm Foundation's analyst(s) has rendered its report unscientific. Since it is not possible to question the testers, or to examine the details of their method, I shall attempt a very rough scientific critique here. It has been more than 20 years since I was employed as an analytical chemist, but nothing in the report requires highly specialized training or exotic equipment. As rusty as I am, what follows should be competent.

According to the Salm text, cold extraction "was the most consistent and gave the easiest to understand and most reliable results." The method isn't described, but it probably involved soaking a snip of an album page in a measured quantity of room temperature ("cold") deionized water for a specified period of time, then reading the pH of the solution using an electronic glass probe and digital pH meter calibrated with a standard pH buffer solution.

The reported results, to two decimal places, imply a degree of accuracy that cannot be attained by this method. But that aside, I'd like to know whether the paper samples were equal in weight, surface area, some other measure, or any measure at all, and to what tolerance. The criteria used to measure the sample would be the most important factor in the resulting concentration of hydrogen or hydroxyl ions that defines the pH of the solution.

It is perfectly conceivable, even likely, that the physical characteristics of some papers would permit the pH of the surface to drop (become more acidic) while the interior remains alkaline. In that case, no amount of buffer would protect an item mounted on the surface, and the test result would tend to encourage undeserved confidence in the product.

Results with two samples surprised the analysts. A footnote states, "These two papers showed an unusually large drop in pH as a result of aging, for reasons that are not clear. The presence of a good alkaline reserve normally holds pH fairly steady during aging. The important thing to note, however, is that the final pH is still reasonable. Possibly the calcium carbonate will buffer the paper within its natural range, 6.5 to 8.0, even with further aging. The papers may very well be long-lived, but without additional testing or other factors not covered here, it is hard to say much more about them." Actually this should have caused them to question

In reality, despite great scientific advances, fashions in the archival preservation of paper and related products change in every generation. Indeed, some manufacturers seem to be stuck in a time warp, and still promote "one hundred percent rag" paper as the best although today's watchword is "acid free." Meanwhile, mounts that have been staining and ruining stamps for forty years are still more widely marketed than those that are relatively safe.

Rather than beginning with the most dire problem of stamp preservation and storage materials—the various plastic leaves, sleeves, binders, slipcases, and mounts that almost every collector uses—the Salm Foundation addressed the area least likely to cause problems—album pages. These were subjected to some fairly simple chemical tests, and the results were reported along with text that purports to evaluate the results of these tests according to the precepts of current archival theory, but stops short of making any recommendations.

Many aspects of this approach merit criticism. Despite the appearance, the tests are not truly scientific. (See sidebar.) By

whether their method was accomplishing what they intend. (Here I am assuming they repeated the test to be certain they hadn't simply made a mistake.)

Using an undisclosed process of artificial aging allegedly equivalent to 150 years, quadrille pages manufactured by Fort Howard Paper Co. fell from pH 8.94 before aging to pH 6.77 after, and Harris Classic Supplement U.S. pages dropped from pH 9.17 to pH 6.75.

I have my doubts about all artificial aging schemes, because they typically fail to anticipate what tomorrow's air will really be like. If I were conducting an experiment with the Salm Foundation's stated goals, I'd do the opposite of what their analysts did.

First I'd set a limit of acceptable acidity—say, pH 4.8 for an ordinary album and pH 5.8 for one of archival quality. (Any piece of paper with a surface pH of 5.0 or higher will be adequate over a lifetime as far as acidity is concerned, contrary to the implication drawn by readers of the Salm report who have not been trained in chemistry or modern archival theory.)

Next I'd prepare a standard solution approximating the acid pollutants of the North American big-city atmosphere that would be expected to drop the pH of paper over time, and then titrate the paper sample with the test solution.

Recording how much test solution is required to drop each album page to an unsafe level would permit ranking all the products from safest to least safe. These figures could then be converted to estimated numbers of years it would take a particular page to reach an unsafe level of acidity. Those would vary according to the projected levels of pollution. Just as in real life, any album page will be safe a lot longer in rural North Dakota than in Whiting or East Chicago, Indiana.

I have simplified my proposed method for the sake of illustration. Actually several samples of each product should be purchased at different times and places, and more than one titrant formula should be tried, to see if the rankings remain the same when various assumptions about the chemical pollutants of 21st century air are tested. Also, a test should be devised to determine whether the paper's buffer (alkaline reserve) is continually available at the surface until it has been completely neutralized by environmental acids. If not, its presence has little meaning.

The report of experiments like these would be very similar to a *Consumer Reports* product comparison. No testing laboratory would have reason to hide its identity, and no publisher would need fear defending its results, in print or in court.

Ken Lawrence

□

keeping the identity of the testing laboratory secret, there is no accountability for some improbable results. And by shunning recommendations of any sort, supposedly for legal reasons, the authors invite the very worst misuse, the condemnation of perfectly safe materials based on the appearance, but not the reality, of scientific judgment.

A proper approach would begin with this question: What would a trained archivist do if challenged to preserve a stamp under the safest possible conditions to guarantee its longevity?

The answer is: He or she would first remove its gum, then bathe it in a broad-spectrum antiseptic/fungicide, then deacidify it (hoping that the chemical used wouldn't attack the ink), and only then mount it in a buffered alkaline, temperature- and humidity-controlled scrubbed-air environment under positive pressure.

No stamp collector would treat any valuable stamp that way. Removing the gum would destroy a considerable portion of its value. Few stamp collectors can filter and deionize the air where their stamps are stored, and then keep it under positive pressure, even those who manage to control the temperature and humidity of their stamp rooms. But it is irrational and unscientific to think that one can apply a single element of archival technique, omit the other steps, and rest in the belief that archival principles are being obeyed.

No stamp technology can preserve today's paper products for millennia. In many cases, even a century is impossible. For those items, archivists don't attempt to save the original, but instead copy it onto a more permanent medium. (The problem is even more dire for film archives. Nitrate-base film is not simply unstable, it is incendiary and explosive, so the sooner the original can be destroyed, the safer everyone is.) Although this answer isn't palatable for today's philatelists, tomorrow's will have to accept it unless much better preservation methods are developed.

Despite current philatelic superstition, low pH (acid) substrates may be as safe as or safer than buffered alkaline for some stamps and covers. An acidic environment provides protection against some biological dangers, such as molds, mildews, and fungi. Mounting an acidic stamp on a buffered-alkaline page could actually hasten its demise. The effect is well known to archivists in this comparison: If you bind a bundle of newspapers without deacidifying them, they will brown at the edges exposed to air, but otherwise will protect each other from aging, and from biological agents as well. On the other hand, if you place a single newsprint clipping in a buffered-alkaline folder, you must first deacidify it; otherwise it will brown and crumble rapidly.

High heat ages paper rapidly, and usually leaves little visual evidence. That is the secret of the stage trick in which a performer effortlessly rips a Manhattan telephone directory in two. Simply baking the book in a 150- to 200-degree (Fahrenheit) oven for several hours weakens the paper sufficiently, but the appearance of the book doesn't change.

An article titled "Preservation and Philately" by John Alden, an expert in the preservation of rare books, in the August 1971 *American Philatelist*, noted that paper ages the equivalent of 26 years in one hour at 100 degrees (Fahrenheit).

Dealers who sell expensive stamps often apply corrosive materials to them for cosmetic effect. Here's a passage from the anonymously published pamphlet *The Dealers' Guide to Chemical Restoration of Postage Stamps* (page 35): "One of the problems with bleaching is the after-effect on the paper of the stamp. The paper will become lifeless and drab. To correct this, one has merely to paint the stamp with very dilute gelatin solution and retone the face with coffee or tea." The author neglected to mention what will happen after a stamp subjected to this treatment is returned to stock, but the result could be tragic. The unlucky purchaser of the *adjacent* stamp won't have a clue to what befell his gem when, two or three or ten years later, half of the stamp acquires a stain or begins to disintegrate. (*The Dealers' Guide* is a travesty, but it seems to be the hobby's standard text on the subject.)

Given all these problems, what is the concerned collector to do if he wants his stamps and covers to last as long as possible?

First, be realistic. I repeat, be realistic. The substances that pose the greatest threat to the survival of stamps and covers are built into them.

For stamps, the dangers are gum (nearly every biological threat thrives on dextrin), paper (especially the coating, sizing, and brighteners), and ink. Even when some of these substances are removed before they can cause damage, the ones we wish to preserve are often unstable or fugitive.

Exposure to light causes many pigments and dyes to fade, and many papers to darken. Minerals that undergo no photochemical or ionizing transformations and are for our purposes inert, such as salts used for luminescent tagging, readily transfer to adjacent surfaces no matter how reduced the chemical activity.

You can easily get a Mylar D mount to glow (or the back of a buffered-alkaline album page) after it has rested for several months against a tagged stamp. Other examples are laser-printed Postal Buddy postal cards, or carbon-ribbon typed addresses on covers. Both of those transfer to mounts that are safe for almost any other kind of philatelic material.

The constituents of covers—windows, glue, tapes, and labels—are commonly more corrosive than the self-destructive substances in the stamps they bear, and some are even friendlier hosts to biological contaminants.

Constituents of the atmospheric environment are dangerous to stamps. Carbon dioxide is ever-present, thus the need for buffered alkaline substrates to neutralize, for as long as possible, the continual minute leaching of carbonic acid from the air. But eventually they all drop in pH, as the Salm report shows, and have to be replaced.

In the modern world, especially in industrial countries, the atmosphere is usually polluted with both acids and complex organic substances that are far more corrosive than carbon dioxide, so any assumptions as to the accuracy of artificial aging have to be regarded as crude guesses. In Kuwait City today, an album page could age "50 years" in a week, and the stamps with them.

In *The American Philatelist* twenty years ago, John Alden quoted a Canadian writer's advice to open your albums from time to time so that air can circulate to the stamps: "It is not air that hurts stamps but the lack of it." Alden replied, "While this

is perhaps true that the clean, fresh, invigorating air of Winnipeg is not harmful, the same can not be said for the atmosphere of New York or Los Angeles. The air we breathe can be as dangerous to our stamps as to ourselves."

Of all the conditions that can be manipulated without "destroying" stamps to save them, fluctuations of temperature and humidity are the most critical. Changes in ambient temperature and moisture more than the specific level of either activate destructive chemical, photochemical, and physical processes, both those built into the stamps and those from the external environment.

Measured by these considerations, paper album pages are the least of our problems. The worst paper pages are almost certain to be good for 20 years, and it would be folly to assume a longer effective life even for the ones that test out as the theoretical best without watching them carefully.

Most modern stamps and covers are not going to survive for a century no matter what preservation techniques are applied. However, with a few notable exceptions, most will easily last 20 years even under poor storage conditions. There is little sense in buying expensive containers for cheap stamps with brief life expectancies.

On the other hand, most very old stamps are fairly well equipped to survive. Archival storage materials are probably an excellent choice for expensive classics. But no buffered alkaline album page or Mylar sleeve will protect a stamp or cover from the ravages of its own gum or glue, or from the creatures that feed on gum and glue. If an item is really worth a million dollars, the owner would be wise to shun conventional philatelic wisdom in favor of true archival technique. □

Flawed Fundamentals

By Henry W. Beecher

Fundamentals of Philately, revised edition, by L. N. Williams. State College, PA. American Philatelic Society, 1990. 876 pages, 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ " by 9", hard cover. ISBN 0-933580-13-4. \$60 (APS members \$48) plus 6% sales tax for Pa. residents, postpaid.

On first viewing this book I leafed through it, wondering how much revision, expansion, and updating had been done. Then to check my impression that the contents were almost identical with the first edition, I made a detailed comparison, page by page.

I find that roughly the equivalent of 28 paragraphs and 11 sentences have been added. A few illustrations and footnotes have been deleted. The new edition is offset rather than letterpress printed, so illustrations look better, the layout is improved, and the new and larger typeface is more legible.

The new index is improved, although not error-free. Many, but far from all, of the former British-style spellings and names of materials have been changed to the American versions.

I conclude that an owner of the first edition will find no compelling reason to buy the revision, unless the mostly cosmetic changes weigh heavily.

Philatelists and philatelic writers who do not have the earlier book definitely need the new one, assuming they have any interest in the production aspects of stamps beyond what can be satisfied by a standard catalog. The Williams book has many

deficiencies, but I can think of no other work that attempts to treat in considerable detail the production of stamps and the resulting varieties.

I would not give the APS high marks for truth in advertising. This book is advertised as "greatly expanded" and "more than 200 pages larger than the original volume." Well, let's see. The original had 664 printed pages, the revision has 873, or 209 more. However, the original pages were 6 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches by 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches with 57 lines of about 87 characters and spaces each; the smaller pages of the revision have 47 lines of about 76 characters and spaces. Accordingly, comparing the 629 pages of text in the original with the 801 pages in the revision, the latter would have more than eight percent fewer words if the proportion of illustrations and footnotes stayed the same. Evidently that is not true, so it appears that the revision has a few more words, but surely by far less than one percent.

The contents of the book (ignoring two cursory chapters on Philatelic Trends and Aims of Collecting) are well indicated by the chapter titles: Paper; Watermarks; Stamp Design; From Design to Issued Sheets' Printing Problems and Varieties; Printing Characteristics; Intaglio Printing (I: Line-Engraving, II: Gravure); Planographic Printing; Embossing; Relief Printing; Inks and Color; Gum; and Separation. Closing each chapter is a glossary of related terms.

In saying that the work has many deficiencies, I would not be understood as brashly saying the emperor has no clothes—just that the raiment is not as imperial as one might assume from the almost unadulterated high praise it has received.

One defect relates to my feeling that such a book published in the United States, primarily for sale to American collectors, should give considerably more attention to U.S. stamps and less to those of the British Commonwealth; and, ideally, be written by an American philatelist—but who would you nominate with the philatelic knowledge and literary ability of Williams?

Another (applying even to the first edition) is that the work is not up to date. Many contemporary production techniques get no mention, or are mentioned obliquely and very briefly, and illustrated by some obscure example produced in the thousands rather than by later production in the billions. Time after time the present tense is used in a statement about an obsolete practice, sometimes about one dead before the first edition.

Reading through the book I made notes of some sixty instances of statements that were incorrect or misleading or of the omission of facts clearly needed to make a discussion meaningful in relation to current reality. Undoubtedly I could have found many more with a really fine-tooth comb. If I, with no claim to be an expert philatelist, can notice so many faults (almost all related to U.S. stamps), one would suppose that a number of people with wide and deep philatelic knowledge could find many more.

Williams acknowledges the assistance of several American philatelists, some dead or with name changed since the first edition. But I sometimes wondered if anyone ever read the first book and sent critical comments to Williams or the publisher. Consider the following examples.

On page 668-69 is a discussion of the difference between "sixteen holes to the inch" and "sixteen holes within the inch,"

and the supposed way in which instructions given in those different terms to a mechanic might result in machinery perforating in two different gauges. First, Williams says that if the zero line of a rule just touches the left of the circumference of one perforation hole, then "if the one-inch just touches the left of the circumference of the sixteenth perforation hole, there are sixteen pins to the inch:" when in fact that is true if "seventeenth" is substituted.

Further, "if the one-inch mark touches the right of the circumference of the sixteenth perforation hole, there are sixteen pins within the inch." Fine, if only a one-inch line is to be perforated—but try that on a longer line: at the end of the first inch and the beginning of the second there will be two holes touching each other, hardly the desired result. Naturally this hypothetical mechanic is not that stupid, so he will make all spaces between holes equal, with the result that in the second inch of the line of perforations there are only 15 pins within the inch. As Williams has posited holes and bridges of equal size, this second construction is the same as "15½ pins to the inch." Williams says both might gauge 12¾ on a gauge with "one-fourth" steps. Actually, since 16 to the inch is gauge 12.6 and 15½ to the inch is gauge 12.2, the respective gauges to the nearest quarter are 12½ and 12¼.

Now let's see how soaking changes perf gauge. On page 671 the U.S. 3¢ Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts stamp is said to gauge 10.5 by 11.25 dry and 10.35 by 10.9 after two minutes soaking. On page 672 the U.S. 13¢ Crazy Horse stamp is said to gauge 11 by 10.25 dry and 10.9 by 10.19 after soaking. But both were perforated by machines of the same specifications, which made a gauge of 11.25 by 10.53 (to the nearest hundredth) or *vice versa*. With my Instanta gauge, after two minutes soaking in tap water I read gauges of about 11.0 and 10.4 for both.

While we are soaking stamps, look at pages 580 and 582, where we are told that the U.S. 4¢ Lincoln regular of 1954 and the 4¢ Atlantic Cable Centenary stamps have inks that run with prolonged soaking and also become brilliantly fluorescent. Perhaps I have missed something, but this was news to me; so I soaked four Lincoln booklet stamps (two long ago "sweated" off paper to leave most of the gum) and one Atlantic Cable over twelve hours. I could see no sign of color bleeding.

Unfortunately my UV lamp is loaned out now. However, so far as I know, there is no substance that can be made fluorescent by water (at least to keep fluorescence after drying). It should be remembered that the Lincoln sheet stamp was first dry-printed and then wet-printed, and that some of the latter product were tagged. Of course, stamps can become fluorescent when soaked from paper to which optical brighteners have been added. □

First Day Classics

By Alan Warren

Checklist of First Days and Earliest Documented Covers 1847-1931, compiled by Edward J. Siskin, 8½" by 11", stiff covers, 43 pages, stapled. American First Day Cover Foundation, 1990. \$12 postpaid from AFDCS Sales, Box 1335, Maplewood, NJ 07040.

Edward J. Siskin is one of a mere handful of collectors who, in the mold of the late Lawrence S. Fisher, is extremely knowledgeable in the field of classic U.S. first day covers. This new checklist, at first glimpse, seems like a simple matter, but in fact is the result of fifteen years of tireless research by Siskin. He has prepared an extensive database not only using auction catalogs and expertizing files, but also the book and periodical literature as well as government records.

The choice of the term "checklist" is indicative of the constant change and updating that such an effort faces as new data comes to light. It is a little distracting that the booklet was stapled so that it is difficult to study, as it won't lay flat. I fixed this deficiency right away by removing the staples and punching the pages for a three-ring binder.

Siskin's sources include the well known names of Ashbrook, Chase, Luff, and Johl, but also journals, auction catalogs, Philatelic Foundation certificates, census data, various journal and newspaper reports, and private records of collectors. The listing follows the Scott catalog numbering system, and the dates shown for each stamp are keyed to abbreviations which indicate that the date is the first day designated by the post office, or first day of sale, or earliest documented cover, or a pre-date. Where the first day of sale cannot be established, the author so indicates.

Even the various grills of the issues from 1867 are dated where possible. The different printings of the banknote issues are listed although data is sketchy for many of them. In a number of cases Siskin states the number of covers known, e.g., 1, 2, 5, 10-15, etc.

Siskin does not attempt to show valuations, which is probably wise, as that sort of information is highly volatile for these early covers, and quickly becomes outdated.

In comparing this checklist against Scott's various catalogs, there are some discrepancies. However, since Scott does not give its sources, it is difficult to determine who is "right." For the later issues where new stamps were released at more than one site, e.g., the Huguenot-Walloon set, the first day cities are listed. Where applicable, the author calls attention to the existence of forgeries.

The listing concludes with Scott No. 701. The title is a bit misleading in that it does not indicate the checklist is concerned only with definitives and commemoratives. No airmail, postage due, special delivery, parcel post, or other back-of-the-book issues appear here.

One nice feature is that the pages are printed on one side only, leaving ample room for collectors to make notations on the back. If you discover an earlier-dated cover than is shown here, you are asked to write to the Catalog Committee at Box 544, Moorestown, NJ 08057.

The book is highly recommended for serious students of classic U.S. stamps.

The American First Day Cover Foundation, which sponsored this project, is in the process of turning over its assets to the American First Day Cover Society. □

A Fine Collection of Phonies

By Barth Healey

Philatelic Forgers: Their Lives and Works by Varro E. Tyler. 5½" by 8½", soft cover, x + 165 pages. ISBN 0-940403-37-4. Linn's Stamp News, P.O. Box 29, Sidney, OH 45365, \$14.95 postpaid.

Varro E. Tyler, by being very precise in his writing goals (something we should emulate), has succeeded admirably in depicting *Philatelic Forgers: Their Lives and Works*. Tyler has gone for scope rather than depth, and has packed more than 150 biographies into a slim volume that seldom spends more than a page on any single profile.

The book is also a model of bibliographic research: footnotes are intelligently placed at the end of each short biography; more important, the great range of contemporary news accounts, many dating back into the 19th century, gives the profiles enormous credibility. It is almost subliminal: a reader thinks aloud, if Tyler went to all the trouble to track down that *Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal* for 1891 (cited in a footnote on page 84), he is truly conscientious in his research.

Though there are plenty of wonderful anecdotes scattered throughout the book, and some practical advice on how to sort out the groups of forgers who operated in Geneva and northern Italy, there is not much on the forgeries themselves; for this one must look to reference works like the *Serrane Guide*. But for a desk reference, when a writer needs a date and a few threads to make a connection with the great and the not-so-great forgers of the past, Tyler's book is indispensable. □

Volumes Two

By Ken Lawrence

Scott 1992 Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue. Volume 2, Countries of the World A-F. 8¼" by 10¼", soft cover, 32A + 1264 + unnumbered advertising pages. ISBN 0-89487-163-3. Scott Publishing Co., 911 Vandemark Road, Sidney, OH 45365. \$30 postpaid.

Catalogue Yvert et Tellier 1991. Tome 2, Pays d'Expression Française. 8¼" by 9¼", soft cover, 832 pages. ISBN 2-86814-035-1. Éditions Yvert et Tellier, 37, rue des Jacobins, 80036 Amiens Cédex, France. 160 French Francs.

If you are among those who believe that Scott is not responsive to suggestions from users, hear me out.

Volume Two has been my special concern longer than any other, because it was I, more than anyone else, who agitated for the inclusion of all Cuban stamps issued since the embargo forbidding their import into the U.S. went into effect in 1962. When Scott's editors decided to do just that a few years ago, many of my stamps and covers were their references. The stamps are listed and illustrated, but not priced. This precedent has since been extended to the stamps of other embargoed countries.

Another Volume Two country I collect is the Peoples Republic of China—not as a specialist, but by new-issue subscription with Unicover/Fleetwood, filling each space since 1980 in a hingeless Schaubek album.

From 1981 to 1983, the PRC issued a 17-value series of

engraved definitive stamps ranging in denomination from 1 fen to 5 yuan, Scott Nos. 1723-1739. Five of the values were also printed by gravure, and Scott has listed those as Nos. 1726a, 1717a, 1729a, 1730a, and 1731a. However, even as a casual new-issue collector, I had received the experimental phosphor-band tagged versions of the three most commonly used gravure stamps—the 4f, 8f, and 10 f values—and my album had spaces for all three. Since I knew these weren't scarce, and were in the collections of U.S. beginners, I asked Scott to list them.

The first and second times I made the suggestion, nothing happened. Last year, I tried again, and added the thought that, if they don't merit separate numbers, perhaps a footnote should be considered. When the 1992 Volume Two arrived, I turned first to page 657, and there it was: "Nos. 1727a, 1729a, 1730a exist tagged. Same values."

Scott does listen.

Volume Two also continues Scott's policy of listing all the stamps previously ignored, but the process is barely under way.

For the first time, the stamps of Bhutan are listed comprehensively, but the numbering system is bizarre, and the new listings of old stamps (including some of Bhutan's most widely used definitives) are unpriced. These problems are the legacy of the old black-blot mindset, and will take time to overcome.

I commend the editors for doing no violence to these listings as they did, unfortunately, to similar ones of Afghanistan and Ecuador. Afghanistan is graced with this footnote on page 11: "No postal need existed for the 1p-15p denominations issued with sets of 1961-63 (between Nos. 486 and 649, B37 and B65). The lowest denomination actually used for non-philatelic postage in that period was 25p (except for the 2p newspaper rate for which separate stamps were provided)." Will they add a similar footnote about current low-denomination United States stamps?

Tucked in ahead of the new 1966 Ecuador listings (page 991) is this: "The postal validity of some of the following sets has been questioned." In years past, statements like this were ritual fare in our philatelic press. For a time I took the trouble to acquire postally used examples on cover of each group so described, and I have written often about them. I haven't done that specifically with the 1966 issues of Ecuador, but I seriously doubt that statement can be supported with evidence.

The previously unrecognized issues of Equatorial Guinea still don't have numbers or illustrations. These are just the former "For the Record" listings moved into the main text sequence. Abu Dhabi and Fujierah, formerly Volume One countries, still lack the previously unlisted issues altogether. This book is a work in progress—and it *is* progress—but with some distance yet to go.

I think it is a mistake for Scott to illustrate recent issues of Taiwan (Republic of China) with specimen stamps rather than with the real thing. The overprinted lines that obliterate the denominations are so similar to actual stamp overprints that collectors could reasonably wonder whether their stamps are the ones intended by the illustrations.

Scott's policy of pricing new issues at double face value until an actual market record exists is probably as good a method as any, but may not work much longer. Recently I purchased 100 copies of a current Taiwanese stamp from one of the largest new-issue dealers. Even in that quantity, I had to pay more than the Scott price.

Volume Two of the Yvert catalog covers French-speaking countries other than France itself. It is the catalog of choice for international trading, because Yvert prices are the only ones regarded as truly relative from country to country. It is also essential for topical collectors and writers in its listings that are still missing from Scott, such as recent stamps of Cambodia and Vietnam. □

U.S. Postal History 1794

By Ernst M. Cohn

Postal Operations in the United States 1794, by Robert J. Stets Sr. 43 pages, 8½" by 11", spiral softbound, typed (except for reproduction), map, tables, 1991. \$7.90 postpaid from author, P.O. Box 142, Walterboro, SC 29488.

The title page reads: "LIST OF POST OFFICES in the UNITED STATES 1794—(both alphabetically and by state)—including the names of postmasters at those offices—and amounts of postage collected for the quarter ending December 31, 1794—also including a copy of the 'Post Office Law' enacted by Congress May 8, 1794—and a listing of private post offices operating in New York and Pennsylvania." But there is more!

Stets also explains 1794 geography, when the "District of Maine" was still part of Massachusetts, for example. He spells out, on page 10, those sections of the law that are of special interest to postal historians; quite useful considering there are some 10 pages of law reproduced in full, even if very clearly and easy to read.

Post offices are listed alphabetically as well as by states. There is contemporary information about private post roads, those in Pennsylvania being shown on a map. The book closes with a brief bibliography.

The author does not just accept someone else's word but does his own researching. As a result, he has discovered sources previously unused by postal historians. They have yielded enough "new" information to publish not only this but several other works in the planning and other preliminary stages. Fortunately, we shall thus reap the benefit of his assiduousness, and at a very modest price for the computer-produced publications.

The book is excellently executed and highly recommended. □

Airmail History

By Myron G. Hill Jr.

Airmail—how it all began, by Carroll W. Glines. x + 165 pages, 5" by 9", illustrated, indexed, 1990. ISBN 0-8306-3378-2. Tab Books, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17294-0214. Soft cover, \$14.95.

Beginning with pigeon post, this book contains a "bird's eye" view of all aspects of airmail. It highlights the historical use of homing pigeons to carry messages. This was a useful means of communication during wartime, especially the 1870-71 siege of Paris, World War I, and even World War II. Balloon mail is discussed, beginning with the French balloonist Pierre Blanchard and his flights in Europe and America. Then balloon mail during the siege of Paris and finally dirigibles are discussed.

U.S. airmail is covered from the first official flight, which was part of an International Aviation Meet at Garden City Estates, New York, in 1911. The story continues with the establishment of U.S. governmental airmail service in 1918. The stories of some of these flights are recounted in entertaining fashion. Then the carriage of mail by private airlines is summarized, as well as the story of the army emergency flights of

What's It Worth?

Polynésie Française



RESSOURCES TRADITIONNELLES
LE COPRAH

The stamp on this first-day cover was withdrawn from sale on July 11, 1989, less than four months after it was issued, by order of a court in Papeete, Tahiti. It is the lower value of a two-stamp set commemorating the economic importance of coconut products to French Polynesia.

The scantily-clad woman depicted on the stamp (and the cachet) had sued under article 9 of the Code Civil, which declares, "Everyone has the right to be respected in his or her private life." She had not given the postal administration permission to use her photo on a stamp meant for worldwide distribution, even though it had been published previously in a book.

The court agreed, and ordered the stamp withdrawn from sale both in Papeete and in Paris. Of 100,000 copies printed, 25,000 had been shipped to the Overseas Agency for Stamps, and approximately half had been sold at Philexfrance '89. I haven't seen any other figures, but if only the standing-order new-issue subscribers and Philexfrance buyers obtained them, that's still a large number in circulation.

The story was first reported in the Tahiti daily, *La Dépêche*, then in the October 1989 *Timbroscopie*, then in the rest of the world's philatelic press.

Even if my cover won't rival the Post Office Mauritius, a stamp with a story like this is certainly worth more than one without such a tale to tell. I am curious about its current value, and that's what catalogs are supposed to be for, but in this instance they are no help.

In the Yvert book, the stamp is pictured, and is No. 326, but no value is given, either mint or used. In Scott, the stamp is No. 505, and is not illustrated; it is valued at \$1 mint and 75¢ used, which are simply new-issue prices. Obviously the saga of this stamp and its subsequent disappearance from dealer stocks hasn't been noted by the Scott editors. I assume the lack of an Yvert price is a consequence of its illegality in France, but I do think the editors should have included a footnote to that effect.

Ken Lawrence □

1934. Other chapters are devoted to airmail firsts, airmail philately, and missile mail.

The book is a well-written introduction to the study of airmail, but do not expect more. The broad subject matter covered prevents any in-depth presentation of the subject. There are many illustrations of airplanes and pilots, but unfortunately no philatelic covers are shown. By contrast, *Airmail Antics* (reviewed in the Fourth Quarter 1990 *PC*) pictures many of the covers from flights described in the text. However, *Airmail Antics* limits its coverage to U.S. airmail from 1918. The philatelic writer who desires a brief introduction to the broader aspects of airmail may find *Airmail—how it all began* useful.

□

The Founding Father

By Bob de Violini

Rowland Hill - Genius and Benefactor, 1795-1897, by Colin G. Hey. Quiller Press, London, 1989. xvii + 192. 27 illus. ISBN 1-870948-32-7. \$19.95 postpaid from Scott Publishing Co., 911 Vandemark Road, Sidney, OH 45365.

For those of us who know Rowland Hill only as the person responsible for the adhesive postage stamp, this biography teaches us that he accomplished much more than that. The word "teaches" is used appropriately here in that Rowland Hill was responsible for some major educational reforms long before he put forth his plans for the reform of the British Post Office.

Much of this took place during the 26 years that he was headmaster of Hazelwood School in Birmingham. In 1822, with his oldest brother, Matthew, Rowland published a book on educational reform, *Public Education*, that soon became a best seller in educational circles and was read worldwide.

During the period 1833-1893, Hill oversaw the organization and operation of the South Australian Commission that established a major emigration program for the colonization of that Australian state. (A check-list of Antarctic-related stamps was published in about 1980, and "Rowland Hill stamps" were included because of some supposed relationship to Antarctica. No polar collector that I spoke to knew of any, and the compiler made no explanation. A search of this biography provided nothing to support that contention. Perhaps the author of that check-list confused South Australia with a region of Antarctica.)

In 1835, with another of his five brothers, Edwin, Rowland patented the first effective rotary printing press. Though it would dramatically increase the speed of production of government reports and also automatically imprint the number of the required Stamp Duty revenue on newspapers, permission was never granted by the Treasury to demonstrate these abilities.

In 1837 he printed the first of four editions of the pamphlet that started collectors on their way to the post office, *Post Office Reform: its Importance and Practicability*.

In August 1839, the Penny Postage Act received Royal Assent, and the next month Rowland was given a two-year appointment—later extended for a third year—to assist in the implementation of the Act. Unfortunately, he was not given any executive authority, but that didn't deter him in his efforts to streamline the Post Office and make its operations more productive.

As we all recall, January 1840 saw the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage; five months later the Penny Black showed up. Hill thought the stamped envelope would be preferred by the public, and was surprised by the response to the Penny Black. As happens to appointees, in 1842 a change in government led to his dismissal.

But Hill wasn't gone long. He became a Director and Chairman of the London and Brighton Railway, and in four years brought it to a level of profitability not seen for some time. In 1846 Hill returned to the Post Office, this time as secretary to the Postmaster General.

In time, another obstruction to his goals was enticed to move to another position, and in 1854 Hill became the Secretary to the Post Office. He finally had the power needed to see that his reforms took place. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1857, and in 1860 Hill was knighted by Queen Victoria.

He retired in 1864 on medical advice after spending some 22 years working on postal reforms. Sir Rowland died in 1879, was given a state funeral, and is buried in Westminster Abbey.

There are three appendixes that deal with the Hills' connection with Thomas Jefferson and educational reforms in the U.S., the development of a school in Sweden similar to Hazelwood, and some of the background relating to the adhesive stamp and the stamped envelope.

This last appendix also briefly explores the occasional claim that James Chalmers should be noted as the "inventor" of the adhesive postage stamp. Chalmers himself wrote to Hill in 1840 renouncing any claim to this role. A set of notes for each chapter, a bibliography for each section of the book, and a detailed index round out this work.

Though I have nothing with which to compare this biography, Colin Hey appears to me to have done a very good job in providing detail and documentation of Hill's life and accomplishments and the manner in which he and various of his five brothers worked together in different projects.

Hey's efforts seem to have been inspired in part by his own career in education and in part from a need to counteract information published by others who apparently view Rowland Hill's accomplishments in not too favorable a light.

Someone with a lot of excess time on their hands is free to look for the publications of M. J. Daunt and Edward C. Baker, and do a "compare and contrast" report on these three—though I see no reason to utilize any time on such an exercise.

□

French Pre-Adhesive Sea Mails

By Ernst M. Cohn

France—Poste Maritime Préphilatelique, Histoire Postale & Catalogue, by Joseph Bergier and Vincent Pothion. Union Marcophile 1990. English and French text. 68 pages, 8¼" by 11¾", map, many illustrations and tables, saddle stitched. 250 French Francs postpaid from Mr. Lucien Bridelance, 19 avenue du Chatelet, F-77150 Lesigny, France.

The senior author is known from his work on (local) sea mails of the 18th century, one of the truly rare sourcebooks of postal history, a translation of which I had recommended in 1990. It has now been translated . . . but into German.

This new bilingual book, English translation by Roger Stroh, appeared as a supplement to #263 of *Les Feuilles Marcophiles*, the French postmark journal. It brings previous, similar works by Lenain, Salle and J. & V. Pothion up to date. The authors briefly consider the mails from before 1759/60, precursors to letters that show entry markings introduced in France at that time. Known examples go back at least to the end of the 14th century (Mediterranean ship mail).

Every conceivable aspect of maritime mail is considered, and the markings are illustrated, characterized, listed, and given rarity factors. Some of the major categories noted are markings used during the "Ancien Régime" (till December 31, 1791), those used from January 1, 1791, prisoner of war markings (about 1756-1806), Napoleonic war letters (smuggled, intercepted, occupied areas), maritime entry marks, 7-Year War marks, markings of specific shipping companies, entry marks from various countries and areas, disinfection marks. This enumeration is by no means complete but gives an idea of the manifold possibilities of collecting material bearing on this interesting subject.

Printing, paper, etc. are first-rate. The book is indispensable to the collector of early maritime mail. □

British Mail Boats for French Colonies

By Ernst M. Cohn

La desserte des colonies françaises par les paquebots réguliers britanniques, et les taxes appliquées sur les correspondances non affranciées en provenance des colonies de 1849 à 1863, by Henri Tristant. Union Marcophile, 1991. 48 pages, 8 1/4" by 11 3/4", map, many illustrations, saddle stitched. 160 French Francs postpaid from Mr. Lucien Bridelance, 19 avenue du Chatelet, F-77150 Lesigny, France.

The author is well known for his studies of mail boats, particularly those of the 19th century serving the French empire.

"The purpose of this study was to follow the evolution of postal tariffs, enumerating the postage rates due on unpaid letters, with a description of the cachets applied to them."

The book treats overseas mail after the French postal reform, effective January 1, 1849; it ends essentially with the imperial decree of September 7, 1863, effective January 1, 1864, when the postal rates for all colonies were changed.

The three main portions of the book concern three successive periods, 1849-53, 1853-56, and 1857-63, as determined by changes in laws and postal regulations. Regulations, practices, itineraries to and from various regions, are cited or described.

It was not until the early 1860s that the French state started to make contracts with French lines to carry the mails, thus ending the long period of British mail service to the French empire.

In the epilogue, Tristant maps out some remaining topics to be studied or at least rounded out, particularly that of other cachets introduced subsequently to the period he considered.

This is a highly specialized topic that is, however, one of keen interest to collectors not only of that type of mail but also to those interested in British mails and in maritime mails in general. The book ends with a useful bibliography and list of illustrations. Paper, printing, etc. are excellent. □

Big Time Small Magazine

By Russell H. Anderson

North Atlantic Philately, a twice-yearly publication (approximately 30 pages) published by Publishing House 5F Kristian Hopballe, Sandknøsen 51 DK-5250 Odense SV Denmark.

This is not a small-time effort! Originally started in the fall of 1986 as a minor publisher's attempt to promote a part of the Scandinavian stamp scene, this has become another source of ideas and techniques for stamp journals in the United States. A true philatelist, Hopballe is quoted as saying, "It is considered almost indecent to profit on philatelic literature."

After three issues a sudden offer from the Farøese Postverk to subsidize a press run of 80,000 copies—a jump from one of 500 copies—placed the small magazine in the philatelic big time.

Costs are at least partially offset by advertisements from philatelic agencies and Scandinavian dealers from Greenland, Iceland, the Farøes, Norway and other northern countries who recognize a good thing when they see it. The year 1991 saw the first small charge levied for recipients who at present are those on the Postverk Føroya's new-issue mailing lists. Anyone may receive the issues for a small fee by applying to Postverk Føroya, Philatelic Bureau, FR-159 Torshavn, the Farøes; or Frimerkjasalan Postphil, P.O. Box 8445, 128 Reykjavik, Iceland.

To say that this small publication is a gem is not overplaying its excellence. In past issues there have been scholarly research articles, including color illustrations of near perfect fidelity. Lucid explanations of various methods of stamp production ran in a series. Color reproductions and listings of new stamp issues rival and better those of the USPS in their every-two-month production, most recently containing misinformation and missing issues. Articles also include such items as special cancellations, personal classified ads, and specialized articles on a variety of North Atlantic issues, just to name a few.

This is another European source from which United States philatelic press groups can pick up ideas to provide more eye appeal and better technical research work. At the moment Bob Malch's UPU production is the only specialized journal that I have seen that approaches *North Atlantic Philately*. It is a much smaller journal and as a one-man production hasn't arrived at a color production program as yet.

Those publishers with the facilities, let's get with it! These Europeans are ahead of you in your game with slick and definitely top-flight informational productions. They may not be making buckets of money but they surely are influencing collectors of Scandinavia! *North Atlantic Philately* covers only a very small part of the world, but in so doing it is a sophisticated publication. □

Software

By Terence Hines

POSTNET Decoder, by Douglas Quine. Triskelion Ltd., Box 220583, Chantilly, VA 22022-0583. \$15 postpaid.

Have you ever tried to decode one of the USPS POSTNET bar codes that appear on the front of most envelopes these days? It can be a real bother—looking back and forth from the code to whatever key you happen to be using, trying to remember where

you are in the code while you remember or write down the last number you decoded, all the while trying not to lose your place.

I usually find it takes two or three runs through the code before I'm satisfied that I've done it right.

Now Doug Quine has written this excellent computer program that takes all the trouble out of the procedure. One simply types in the bar code, using a "1" for the tall and a "." for the short bars and, presto, the correct ZIP code appears on the screen.

The program works for both five- and nine-digit ZIPs, and will indicate errors if you make a typo or if the bar code itself is faulty. The program is available for either IBM or Apple machines. When ordering be sure not only to specify which machine you use, but the size diskette you need. □

Literature Awards

Bill McAllister of Fairfax, Virginia, stamp columnist for *The Washington Post*, has been awarded the 1990 Lidman Prize for excellence in philatelic writing in non-philatelic publications. The 1990 competition was the fourth annual contest sponsored by the Council of Philatelic Organizations in an effort to encourage and recognize writing about the stamp-collecting hobby in publications read by the general public.

McAllister accepted a plaque and a cash prize of \$500 in a ceremony at NAPEX 91.

The jury for the 1990 contest comprised philatelic writers George B. Griffenhagen and Barth Healey, and Brian Winston, a journalist and dean of the school of communications at Penn State University. The judges selected winners at three award levels from among the entrants, and chose McAllister from among the gold-level prizewinners. McAllister's stamps and coins columns appear in the *Post's* Weekend section every Friday.

A gold award with felicitations was given to Frances J. Pendleton in the 1990 competition, for her column "Stamping Around" in *Sports Collectors Digest*. Gold awards also were given to Edward J. Davis Jr., for his stamp column in the *Providence Journal Bulletin*, and to Edwin L. Jackson for two articles, "Using Stamps to Teach," in the quarterly journal *Teaching Georgia Government*.

Receiving silver awards were Ernst M. Cohn for an article, "When Balloon Mail was Functional," in *Balloon Life* magazine, and Penny Colman for an article about stamps in *U.S. Kids Weekly Reader*.

Bronze awards were given to George W. Brown, stamp columnist for the *Asbury Park Press* in New Jersey; to Fred Greene, stamp columnist for the *Dallas Morning News*; and to Joseph Zollman, stamp columnist for the newspapers under the auspices of the *Huntsville Times* in New York State.

Seven other entrants received honorable mentions in the 1990 competition. The combined writing efforts of the entrants reached a potential readership of more than four million persons, based on circulation figures of the publications involved.

The Philatelic Communicator received a silver award at the Cardinal Spellman Museum's annual Philatelic Literature Fair.

Unfortunately the sponsors did not send a palmares, so we cannot yet report the other winners.

Canada's First National Philatelic Literature Exhibition

GOLD - COURT of HONOUR:

Canada's Small Queen Era, 1870-1897, The Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation.

GOLD:

Gold Fever, Kenneth J. Kutz.

North Atlantic Mail Sailings, 1840-1875, Walter Hubbard and Richard F. Winter.

Anatolia, Menachim Max Mayo.

VERMEIL:

Northwest Territories Postal Cancellations, 1907-1986, Kevin O'Reilly.

Small Queens of Canada by John Hillson, Christie's Robson Lowe.

American Philatelic Congress 1990 Congress Book, Barbara Mueller, editor.

The Airmails of Egypt, John Sears.

Timbres de France au Type Merson, The Royal Philatelic Society, London.

Western Roundup, William T. Crowe, editor.

Postal Reform & The Penny Black: A new appreciation, Douglas N. Muir.

"Herewith My Frank..." (Second edition), James William Lovegrove.

Constant Plate Varieties of the Canada Small Queens, Ian Kimmerley, publisher.

Confederate States of America, Markings and Postal History, L. H. Hartmann, publisher.

The Canadian Military Posts, Volume 3, 1947-1989, Rich Toop.

Collectors Club Philatelist, E. E. Fricks.

The Philatelic Foundation Quarterly, The Philatelic Foundation.

Postal History Journal, Harlan F. Stone.

The American Philatelist, Bill Welch.

SILVER:

Philatelic Horses & Horse Relatives (A.T.A. Handbook #116), Ruth Y. Wetmore.

A Handbook on Transatlantic Mail, Dr. J. C. Arnell.

Korean Kingdom and Empire Philatelic Catalog and Handbook, Michael Rogers, Inc.

The Postal History of the District of Assiniboia, 1882-1905, Ronald Kell.

Territorial Post Offices of Canada, William G. Robinson.

Doane-Thompson Catalog of U.S. County and Postmaster Postmarks, K. L. Gilman, editor.

A Collector's Guide to U.S. Machine Postmarks, 1871-1925 with examples of later types, D. G. Phillips Publishing Co., Ltd.

"Pioneer Mail of Western Canada" as collected by S. S. Kenyon. J. A. Hennok, Ltd.

Poland Occupied in WW II and the Holocaust, E. T. Superson.

Opinions I-V: The Complete Abstracts and Index, The Philatelic Foundation.

Cahier du 10e Anniversaire, 1980-1990, Société d'histoire postal du Québec.

Cahiers de l'Académie - OPUS VII, Académie québécoise d'études philatéliques.

Les oblitérations du Cameroun, 1914-1960, M. P. Bratzel Jr.

Canadian Map Stamp of 1898 - A Plating Study, W. L. Bradley.

Post Offices of Cape Breton, C. Munden.
The Post Office on Prince Edward Island (1787-1990), G. D. Murray.

U.S. Postal Markings Impressed by Machines, B. Billings.
The British Postal Reform of 1839 to 1840, J. L. Grimwood-Taylor.

The Irish S.P.I. Censor Labels, C. J. G. Verge.
Checklist of First Days and Earliest Documented Covers, 1847-1931, S. M. Ripley.

Canadian Revenues - Vol. I - III, E. Zaluski.
Territorial Assiniboia and Saskatchewan, R. Gray.
The Philatelic Exhibitor, J. Hotchner, editor.
The Philatelist and P.J.G.B., Christie's Robson Lowe.
Ice Cap News, R. de Violini.

The Philatelic Communicator, G. Griffenhagen.
USCS Log, R. D. Rawlins, editor.
PHSC Journal, R. A. Lee, coordinating editor.
Sarawak Journal, Sarawak Specialists Society.

Philatélie Québec, F. Brisse, rédacteur.
B.N.A. Topics, V. L. Willson, editor.
British Caribbean Philatelic Journal, M. Swetland, editor.
The Czechoslovak Specialist, M. Vondra.

Die Harfe, Heinz-Jürgen Kumpf.
1990 Durland Standard Plate Number Catalog, R. Sloat, publications chairman.

British Commonwealth Revenues, J. Barefoot Ltd.
Postal Stationery of Ireland, Heinz-Jürgen Kumpf.
The Canadian Revenue Stamp Catalogue, E. S. J. van Dam.

SILVER-BRONZE:

Pharmaceutical Philately, by George Griffenhagen. D. W. Smith.
The Garfield-Perry Stamp Club, 1890-1990: A brief History, Dale R. Pulver.

Marques du Québec, Période 1876-1907, Société d'histoire postale du Québec.

Full Circle Proof Strikes of Western Canada, R. A. Lee Philatelist, Ltd.

The Town Cancels of British Honduras, 1880-1973, E. Addiss.
The Post in Scotland, J. Grimwood-Taylor.
The Maltese Cross in Ireland, Heinz-Jürgen Kumpf.

Introduction to the Post Offices of County Clare, Ireland, Heinz-Jürgen Kumpf.

NYRBA's Triple Crash Covers, Outlaw Flight and its Postal Markings, J. Grigori Jr.

Stamp Collector, D. S. Claussen.
The Stamp Wholesaler, D. S. Claussen.

Maple Leaves, D. Sessions.
Philatelic Paraphernalia, V. Short.

The Canadian Connection, J. Peebles.
Canadian Re-Entry Study Group Newsletter, R. Trimble.

Canadian Military Mail Study Group, K. V. Ellison, editor.
Menelik's Journal, H. Gagnon, editor.

BRONZE:

Stamp Collecting - Question and Answer Handbook for Adult Collectors, B. Krause.

The New Herst-Sampson Catalog, A guide to 19th Century United States Postmarks and Cancellations, K. Gilman, editor.

Canada Constant Precancel Varieties, H. Reiche.
The Canadian Admiral Stamps. A complete, Annotated Reference Guide, H. Reiche.

Internment Mail of The Isle of Man, J. C. Field, Ltd., Publishers.
La poste aux Iles-de-la-Madeleine, Lola Caron.

The Revealer: Journal of the Eire Philatelic Association, P. Ryan Sr., editor.

The Australian Exhibitor, R. Duberal, editor.
The Newfie Newsletter, C. A. Stillions.

Korean Philately, J. Kerr.
Transatlantic Mail Study Group Newsletter, Dr. J. Arnell.

The R.P.O. Newsletter of B.N.A.P.S., W. Robinson.
Map Stamp Study Group Newsletter, W. Bradley.

N.S. Postal History Study Group, C. Munden.
Waterlow Study Circle Journal, Waterlow Study Circle.

Watercraft Philately, R. Tessier.

Certificate of Participation:

The British Mails of the Graf Zeppelin, J. C. Field, Ltd., publishers.

The Forging, Fortune and Failure of the Third Reich, L. Cherns.

Auction Catalogue Court of Honour:

Public Stamp Auctions #58, 61 and 63, John Sheffield, Philatelist.
Ambassador J. William Middendorf II Collection of Carriers and Locals, Richard C. Frajola, Inc.

The War of 1812: The Richard Frajola Collection of Letters and Postal History, Richard C. Frajola, Inc.

United States Postal History: The Thomas J. Alexander Collection, Richard C. Frajola, Inc.

A Selection of Auction Catalogues, including The American Bank Note Company Archives - North America, Christie's Robson Lowe.

1990 Airposts (16) and Asia (17) Sales, Michael Rogers, Inc.
Rosemary J. Nickle Auction Catalogue; Sam C. Nickle Auction Catalogue; Rarities of Philatelic Literature - 1990, Charles G. Firby Auctions.

Robert A. Lee Philatelist, Auctions (auction # 62).
Ian Kimmerly Stamp Auctions #4 to #8.

Auction Catalogue: 'Ashanti' Gold Coast, Stanley Gibbons Auctions, Ltd.

A Selection of Auction Catalogues, Stanley Gibbons Auctions Ltd.
The "Zurich Collection" of Newfoundland, Cavendish Auctions Ltd.

Philatelic Bibliopole Stock Catalog No. 15, L. H. Hartmann.
Saskatoon Stamp Centre catalogues. □

Coming Literature Competitions

The fifth annual Lidman Prize competition is now accepting entries. The 1991 contest closes October 1, 1991, and will consider entries published between October 1, 1990, and September 30, 1991.

For a copy of rules and an entry form write to Lidman Prize, P.O. Box COPO, State College, PA 16803. □



PhilITex 92, the international literature exposition announced for New York during November 4-14 next year, will be open to philatelic books of the 10 previous years and to periodicals, columns, catalogs, and audio-visual programs of the previous five years.

PhilITex 92 is accepting entries from all countries in the Americas and from France,

Great Britain, Portugal, and Spain, which played the major roles in the initial exploration and settlement of the Western Hemisphere. It is also open to entries from the rest of the world that contain at least partial content related to the Americas.

The Philatelic Foundation (PF) and The Collectors Club (CC) in New York, the co-sponsors, are holding PhilITex 92 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Columbus's landing in the Western Hemisphere. The event will be the first international philatelic literature exposition in North America.

Judging the entries will be an international jury of 10 from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, the Caribbean area, England, France, Spain, and the United States, including three U.S. representatives.

The PhilITex 92 committee has applied for tax-exempt status as a not-for-profit organization. The original committee of six, representing the PF and CC, has drawn together 20 others who are also working on arrangements. The co-chairmen are Dr. Roberto M. Rosende, PF chairman, and Kenneth J. Kutz, CC president.

PhilITex 92 Bulletin No. 1 with entry rules will be in distribution by July 1991. Prospective exhibitors may send their names to Harlan F. Stone, the general commissioner, at the PF, 21 East 40th St., New York, NY 10016. □

►► Twenty Secrets . . . (From page 49, column one.)

new literature from books through club journals. They will give you story ideas relating to philatelic material; and can themselves be reviewed. Clubs that focus on specialty areas can be reported also with your recommendation.

2. *Apply yourself to serious shopping* whenever you have an opportunity to go to a show, bourse, club meeting or contact another collector. Buy anything that appeals to you as a possible story. You don't need to write it immediately. But once you know you have it, and that knowledge is in your subconscious, it's amazing what connections will rise up for you as time passes—both in terms of ideas and additional material to lengthen your story. By the way, if you can't afford some material you'd like to make an article of, ask the dealer if you can borrow it to have it photographed in exchange for a credit line in your column. It doesn't work every time, but it does often.

3. *Keep up with current events.* This doesn't mean just new issues. Watch the philatelic press for new discoveries about older material.

4. *Read old copies of the philatelic press and society journals.* Contemporary reactions to older issues and background available at the time (that was subsequently buried) make interesting stories.

5. *Talk with collectors of your subject area.* Find out what their interests are, what they know and don't know, where they are running into problems with their own collecting, and how they have solved those problems.

6. *Read widely in the non-philatelic literature and current events of your area.* Look for connections to stamps and covers. Look not just for the story behind the stamp, but the story behind the stamp design content. Look also for ways in which

your philatelic material can give a new dimension to little-known facts of history. Books of quotations are also a useful tool.

7. *Become thoroughly competent as a philatelist.* Learn about the methods of and equipment used in stamp/cancellation production that created the material you write about. Often, the material reflects the capabilities of the equipment.

8. *Think about connections* between old issues and new issues; look for new ways to group material and how that can create stories.

9. *Be alert to your readers' questions and observations.* There is raw material there for opinion pieces on trends, and good ideas that you can help to push.

10. *Use the knowledge and experience of your readers.* You will never know everything, and in fact, you will learn as a columnist, if you don't already know it, just how little you really do know. But the 75,000 or so readers of *Linn's* know virtually everything, as will the readers of your work. They'll tell you when you blow one, but if there is something you know you don't know, why not ask them to solve the puzzle. It is my experience that, if asked, many people provide information of lasting value to the hobby—and it would have died with them if you hadn't asked!

11. *Ask for opinions.* Running surveys is very labor intensive, but it is also rewarding if you get a good response, get thoughtful answers and good trend information.

12. *Say thank you to those people who have made a contribution in your field.* Nothing is sadder than saying thanks to someone who has just passed away. I believe in "Flowers for the Living," especially for those who don't get much recognition because they are young, new, in a very specialized field, etc.

13. *Sit in a quiet, dark room, or out on the front porch, and let your mind wander.* The psychologists call this "free associating," and it is a very valuable tool once you learn to use it. Start with a fact, an issue, a problem, and let your mind skip from thought to thought with no requirement for a particular end point. Sometimes the light bulb will come on, other times it won't, but it's always fun to see where this process leads.

What Do You Do With Material:

1. *Write it down.* When you have an idea, put some notes on paper so that you don't lose it. Dip into that file as you have time to develop concepts.

2. *Use Humor* in your commentary and in your selection of material. People like to laugh.

3. *Be accurate.* Use your reference material to be sure that the littlest fact about which you are unsure is correct. *Don't guess!*

4. *Identify commentary as such.* Facts are facts. Editorializing is opinion.

5. *Be emotional.* Too much of philatelic writing is a dry recitation of facts. It may inform but it won't inspire. Add that dimension to your writing by explaining cogently what you do and don't like, and why.

6. *Write.* Let your pen or fingers on the keys go free. It's easy to tie yourself up in knots looking for the perfect opening, the perfect description, the perfect connector. Inspiration is facilitat-

ed by rapid mental flow. Put down what you can. Refine it later if you need to. Drop an idea if you can't make it work for you in five minutes; and go on to something else.

7. *Go back to story ideas* that wouldn't develop at the time you first tried them. They've been in your subconscious "cooking" and a review of that file periodically does reveal some ideas that are ready.

At the beginning of this piece I said that inspiration requires time and focus. The "time" element is probably clear to you above. The "focus" part may not be.

So let me close by saying that you will facilitate your inspiration by finding a relaxing place to work with as few distractions as possible. You need both your conscious and subconscious on full alert. Thus, being well rested will also help; as will eliminating interruptions such as the telephone.

As hard as it may be to conceive of following some of these "secrets," give 'em a try. You won't be disappointed. □

►► Inside USPS . . . (From page 49, column two.)

it as good news when I say that we finally are ready to begin repairing the damage." Had that actually transpired, we could all rejoice. Unfortunately it hasn't, and part of the reason is his continuing attempts to manage the news.

For example, a week before the Congressional hearing on stamp procurement in June, several reporters were told that the first printing of the 29¢ Fishing Flies booklet had failed to meet required standards and had to be destroyed, just as had happened with the first printing of the 29¢ William Saroyan stamp earlier. The source of this new allegation was the printers' grapevine, through which information travels at lightning speed from one establishment to another, whether private or governmental. Anyone with a contact among security printers could have picked it up.

But USPS press representatives stood firm in their denials, and without additional proof, none of the papers could run the story. Gordon Morison's prepared testimony attacked the quality of Bureau of Engraving and Printing stamps, specifically the 29¢ Wood Duck booklet stamps that he said had failed the soak test. He didn't want any more negative press about stamps manufactured by his favored private-sector consortium.

Now, with the hearing (and accompanying media attention) safely past, we have further evidence that the printers' rumor was true. Fishing Flies panes printed from cylinder numbers A11111, the first ones manufactured, are not plentiful.

So far collectors have found twelve cylinder number combinations, including numbers as high as 5 (black), 3 (yellow, orange, and cyan), and 2 (magenta). This many printing cylinders would be expected for a definitive stamp that returns to press many times, but is unusual for a stamp that should have been printed in a single press run.

The booklets that were accepted by the Postal Service are of generally poor quality. Order-fillers at Philatelic Sales Division headquarters in Kansas City declined to fill a large order for Fishing Flies booklets from an Eastern dealer because they knew their supplies did not meet his quality requirements. (Earlier the

dealer had returned twenty KCS 29¢ Flower booklets because they contained no panes.)

Further evidence of problems came in a June 27 *Postal Bulletin* notice titled "Fishing Flies Booklets: Canceled Automatic Distribution." In New York, it said, "Due to production and distribution delays, the automatic distribution is canceled."

Fishing Flies Booklets: Canceled Automatic Distribution

The article, \$5.80 Fishing Flies Commemorative Stamp Booklet, in *Postal Bulletin* 21790, 5-30-91 (page 3), stated that the New York Postal Data Center (NYPDC) will furnish an automatic distribution listing for stamp distribution offices (SDOs) to ship Fishing Flies booklets to their associate offices. Due to production and distribution delays, the automatic distribution is canceled. The NYPDC will not furnish SDOs with printouts and labels.

—*Philatelic and Retail Services Dept.*, 6-27-91

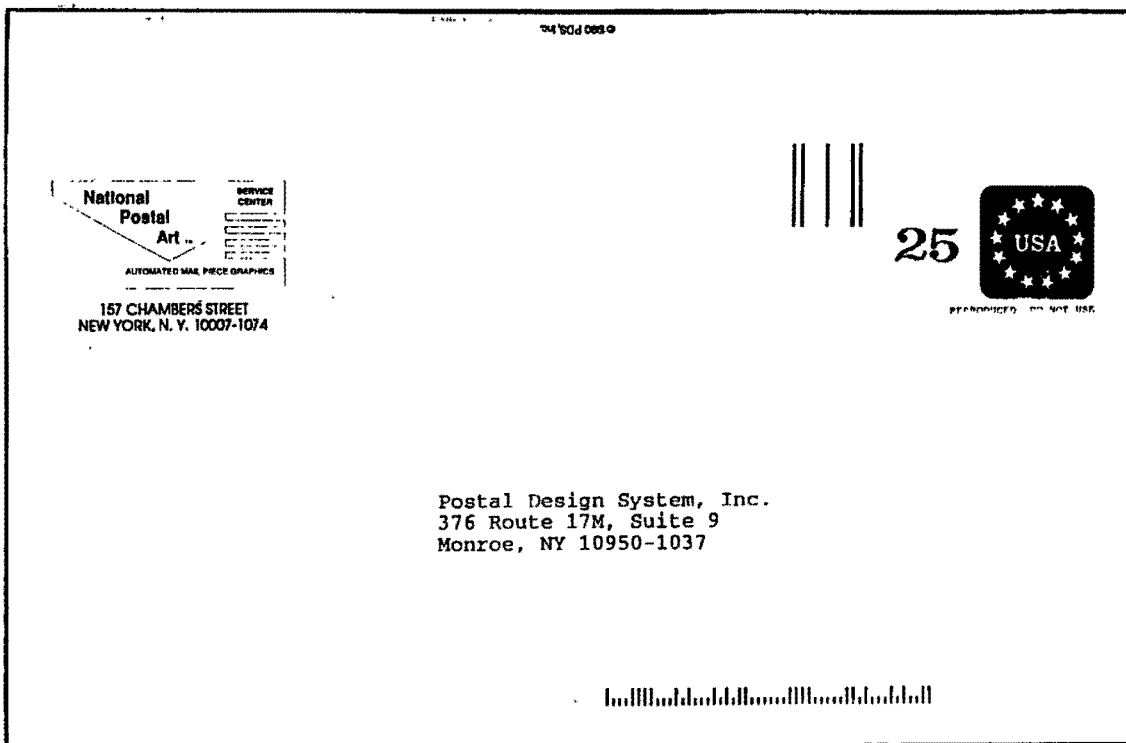
By stonewalling the truth about shoddy booklets from private-sector suppliers, Morison and McDowell succeeded in managing the news.

Another example is the 29¢ Desert Storm stamp fiasco. My source had notified me about that stamp even before Bill McAllister's reference in the *Washington Post* and Mark Kellner's report in *Stamp Collector* quoting the Postmaster General. When *Linn's* tried to get confirmation, no press representative would confirm what the PMG had said, and I could not report it without "burning" my source. Yet, even as USPS people were refusing to give information to *Linn's*, they were supplying Fleetwood with full-color art of the stamp design. Finally, they gave the unveiling story exclusively to *USA Today* just as the Fleetwood promotion was being mailed. Only after *USA Today* was on the stands and Fleetwood's sales brochure was in the mail (and its illustrated ads in the non-philatelic press) did USPS release the design to the philatelic press and other national media. (Fleetwood flyers showed a July 4 first-day cancel. The actual issue date was July 2.)

Although Gordon Morison impugns my sources, they have certainly acquitted themselves more honorably than he and his designated spokespeople have. Yes, they have axes to grind. Morison and McDowell have built a reservoir of resentment among present and former employees. But my sources' information has been consistently more timely and more reliable than the official handouts and denials.

It isn't unusual for bosses to gag underlings, but the Postal Service goes a step beyond that, instructing its outside contractors also to shun the press. Here's my worst example, a story they have denied me for more than a year:

Douglas B. Quine picked up the illustrated sample stamped envelope self-mailer at the May 1990 National Postal Forum in Anaheim. It included a full-color 25¢ Stars specimen stamp



indicium, facing identification marks, corner card, complete addressee information with nine-digit ZIP code, and destination bar code. The sample illustrates how the product will emerge from a computer. The contractor will supply the software (developed for Apple *Macintosh* computers) and the forms with stamp imprints on them—not only for first-class, but also discounted commercial and nonprofit bulk-rate indicia.

“It all works because the Postal Service allows us to put indicia on our ENVELet product,” said Vinny Ramirez, president of ENVELet Corporation.

Ramirez said 3,000 similar forms were used in a test mailing with a Pitney-Bowes metered control mailing, one of each per recipient. He said 86 percent of his product arrived a day earlier than the regular metered first-class pieces.

The actual production versions were scheduled to appear some time this year, after the rate increase, sporting red “Stop Cancer” Stop Sign indicia. The first one will go to the Smithsonian Institution, and 250,000 to philatelic sales, with another 250,000 for actual intended use. (Assuming the deal didn’t go sour, I surmise that the delay has been caused by the Postal Service’s continuing maneuvers to install the higher requested rates before the year is out.)

I cannot write the story for *Linn’s* without independent confirmation that the Postal Service has agreed to the essentials. Without that independent confirmation, it could be that I’m being manipulated by a hopeful promoter into boosting his stock, the way so many writers were hustled by Marc Rousso a few years ago. With confirmation, it’s an important story, and might prompt some questions about the quality, security and accountability implications of such privately-produced or -marketed pieces of postal stationery.

Gordon Morison wrote, “If there is such a chasm as your writer points out, it should and will be fixed. But not through

one meeting with one writer or one publication’s representatives.”

When will it be fixed? How many more of us must approach him as supplicants before he listens and responds? But this is the kicker that prompted my open letter: Why does it need fixing in the first place? Providing accurate, timely information is like falling off a log. Stonewalling and misleading reporters require a great deal more effort and determination than telling the simple truth.

In the days when truth-telling was the policy, before someone began using the disclosure of stamp information as a way to reward friends and punish perceived enemies, no one had to “scoop” someone else just to learn what stamps and postal stationery were slated to be issued, but that is what we face today. □

The Last Words

By Joe F. Frye

In the last issue I asked plaintively why no letters were coming directly to me from our readers. To my great pleasure, two did.

Ken Lawrence included Healey’s letter, below, in the “Letters” feature this issue, but (see following his letter) it wouldn’t work.

From Barth Healey (to Joe Frye):

I’ll be glad to write to you. You should not feel neglected.

First, the look and feel of *PC* are excellent. There is still a bit of makeup untidiness in the back couple of pages because housekeeping details like membership lists and the like seem cluttered by nature. Maybe a special format could be created to anchor these items in various spots on the back two pages.

Second, you created a sort of bibliophobic oxymoron with

the current *PC*: There is a fair number of us who save complete runs of periodicals in as nearly pristine a condition as the United States Postal Service will deliver them. But, by making the ballot and the survey tearout pages, you require us to violate the book. My copy is now damaged goods. I could have photocopied the survey, of course, but I assumed you would not accept a photocopy of the ballot; else, there could have been box-stuffing. I'll have to describe my copy as "fine for issue." Don't we all love it when auction houses use such a precise phrase? (*bibliophilic oxymoron? jff*) □

It wasn't possible to include Healey's welcome letter in the "Letters" feature. Ken wanted the cuts in particular places in the text. Things wouldn't work both ways.

Another member wrote me, and here's part of his long and very interesting letter. I'll send Ken a copy and we'll see more of it in one of the next issues—perhaps including some of his suggestions.

From Al Starkweather (To Joe Frye):

Your *number* is up! As I have done for several other publications, including *The Airpost Journal*, I am going to critique *The Philatelic Communicator*. Take heart! There is far less ground to cover for your publication than there was for the others.

. . . I am using *WordPerfect 5.1* and *Aldus PageMaker 4.0* as primary programs with a Philips 386SX. *PageMaker* documents have to be printed out where my wife works, as we currently only have a Harris daisy wheel printer . . . a *Brother HR-15* in drag, if you will. I suppose a laser printer will have to be adopted soon. (*Hewlett-Packard LaserJet III? jff*)

. . . In my estimation, *The Philatelic Communicator* has come light years under the guidance of you and Ken. The appearance is much cleaner and more readable. This does not mean that there is no room for improvement, although the changes I will suggest fall into the category of refinements rather than a total makeover.

. . . The table of contents should be moved to page two to mate with the masthead. The membership report would fit inside the back cover.

. . . Needleman's *Going Up* satire provides a good model of what one can do in this area, although it may be a bit extreme for your purposes.

. . . Your publication follows the old style of many journals . . . consecutive page numbering from issue to issue for an entire volume. I am a strong advocate for new pagination with every issue, as this makes each magazine its own entity and makes indexing much more simple.

. . . Unlike many publications, yours has a uniform appearance . . . uniform to the point of dullness.

. . . There is a crying need for illustrations—photos and line art—to break up the grayness of your pages. A good place to start in the current issue would (*have been*) mug shots of the candidates for office.

. . . Your two-column format is a bit cumbersome, as maximum readability generally falls between 9 and 18 picas; your 22 pica-wide columns are a bit much for the eye to scan

easily. Try some pages with three columns of 13 picas each with two gutters of 1 pica each; you don't need column rules. Perhaps for the letters you could go four columns of 9 picas each with three gutters of 1 pica each. You could retain the two-column 22 pica-wide format . . . reducing the gutter between them to 1 pica, for the covers, page 2, and the secretary-treasurer's report.

Don't be afraid to change formats after jumping an article.

. . . I hope all this hasn't overloaded your circuits . . . and offers some concrete help . . . Remember, you wanted to hear from "someone out there." Taken step by step, it shouldn't be that difficult.

And, you always can call me for support and tips on the eccentricities of *WordPerfect 5.1*, which range from the ridiculous to the absolutely maddening . . . even to the "it's a hot day, so I'll glitch" syndrome. Still, it's less maddening than *PageMaker* and my three paint programs.

Eight single-spaced (nice fat type) pages of good information, generously offered by that irreplaceable, unrepayable gift—(his) time.

Thank you, Al! □

►► Secretary-Treasurer . . . (From page 72.)

Welcome: We welcome these new members who have joined WU 30 since our March 7, 1991, report:

1600 Stephen D. Schumann, 2417 Cabrillo Drive, Hayward, CA 94545. Author "President's Column," *The Philatelic Exhibitor*. Sponsor: John M. Hotchner.

1601 Howard Lee Lucas, 3702 North Fairfield Lane, Daly City, VA 22193. Author: *Meters on Health*; Freelance writer, *ACIAM* (Milan, Italy), and *SSVO* (Prague, Czechoslovakia). Sponsor, John M. Hotchner.

1602 David M. Schiller Jr., P. O. Box 10, Albany, OR 97321. Editor, *Stamp Collector*. Sponsor: Steven J. Rod.

1603 James Bendon, P.O. Box 6484, Limassol, Cyprus. Author: *UPU Specimen Stamps*; publisher of philatelic handbooks. Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.

Reinstated:

The following former member of WU 30 has been reinstated:

1487 Tom Clarke, Box 290-145, Davie, FL 33329.

Help Us Keep Your Mailing Address Current

Some WU 30 members are still not sending address changes to me, and the USPS charges 30¢ for every notification of address change. Prompt notice assures each issue of *The Philatelic Communicator* is received without delay.

George Griffenhagen
Secretary-Treasurer, WU 30
2501 Drexel Street
Vienna, VA 22180 □

Writers Unit 30, APS
2501 Drexel Street
Vienna VA 22180
Address Correction
Requested

BULK RATE
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID AT
MEMPHIS TN
PERMIT 957

TO:

Secretary-Treasurer's Report (As of August 12, 1991)

Election of Officers:

Deadline was August 12, 1991, for receipt of ballots in WU 30 election. From a total of 79 ballots, here's how the voting went in one of the closest races for Council in recent history.

President

Charles J. Peterson 73
Diana Manchester (write-in) 2

Vice-President, East

Steven J. Rod 74

Vice-President, West

Robert D. Rawlins 68

Secretary-Treasurer

George B. Griffenhagen 75

Council Members (1991-1995)

Dane S. Claussen 51
Mark A. Kellner 33
Martin Margulis 17
Norma L. McCumber 35
Augustine H. Serafini 17
Daniel J. Siegel 26
Alan Warren 39
Pat Herst (write-in) 1
Peter McCann (write-in) 1

Your newly-elected officers are:

President Charles J. Peterson; Laurel, MD
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Vice-President, West . . . Robert D. Rawlins; Healdsburg, CA
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